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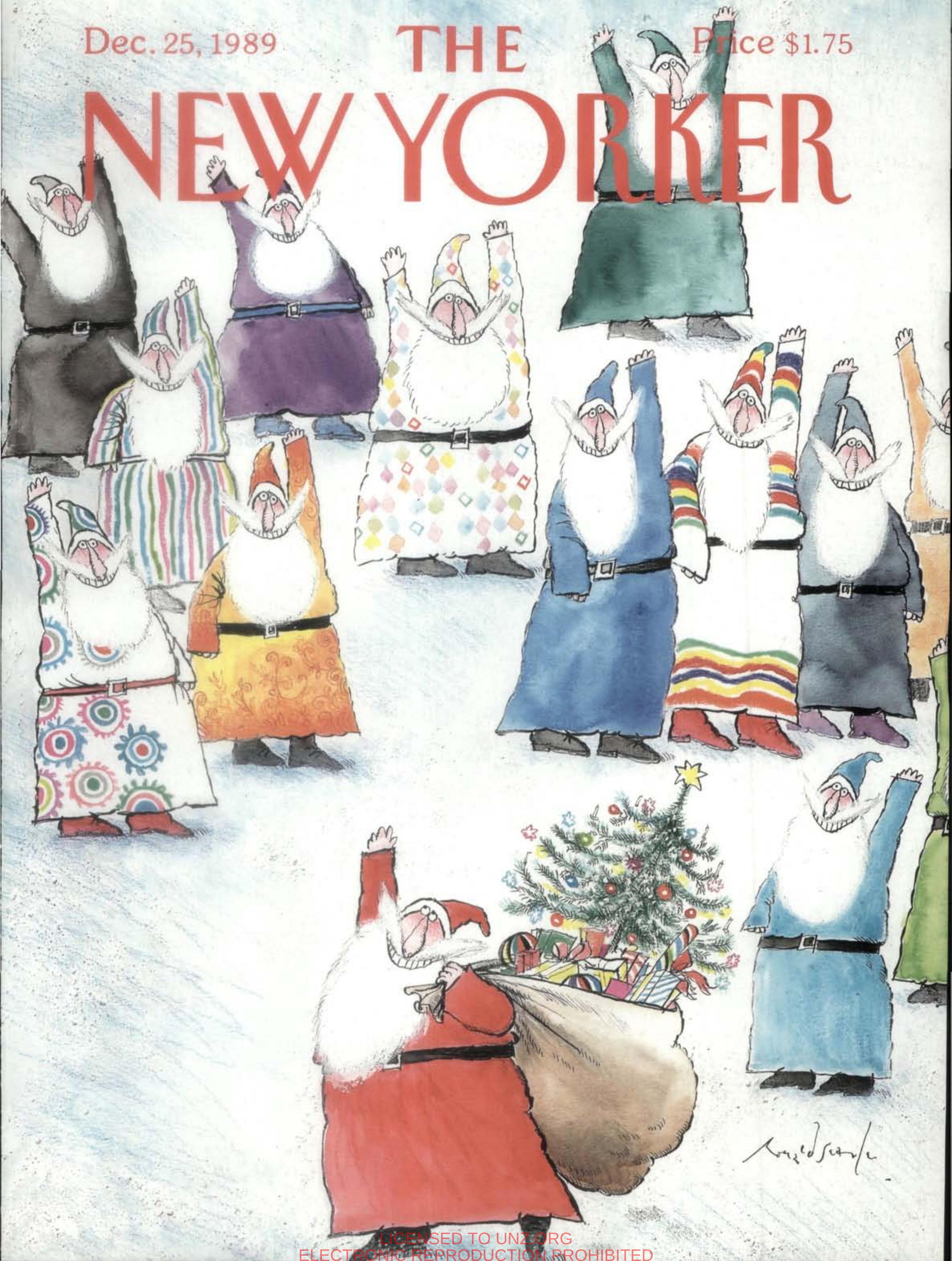

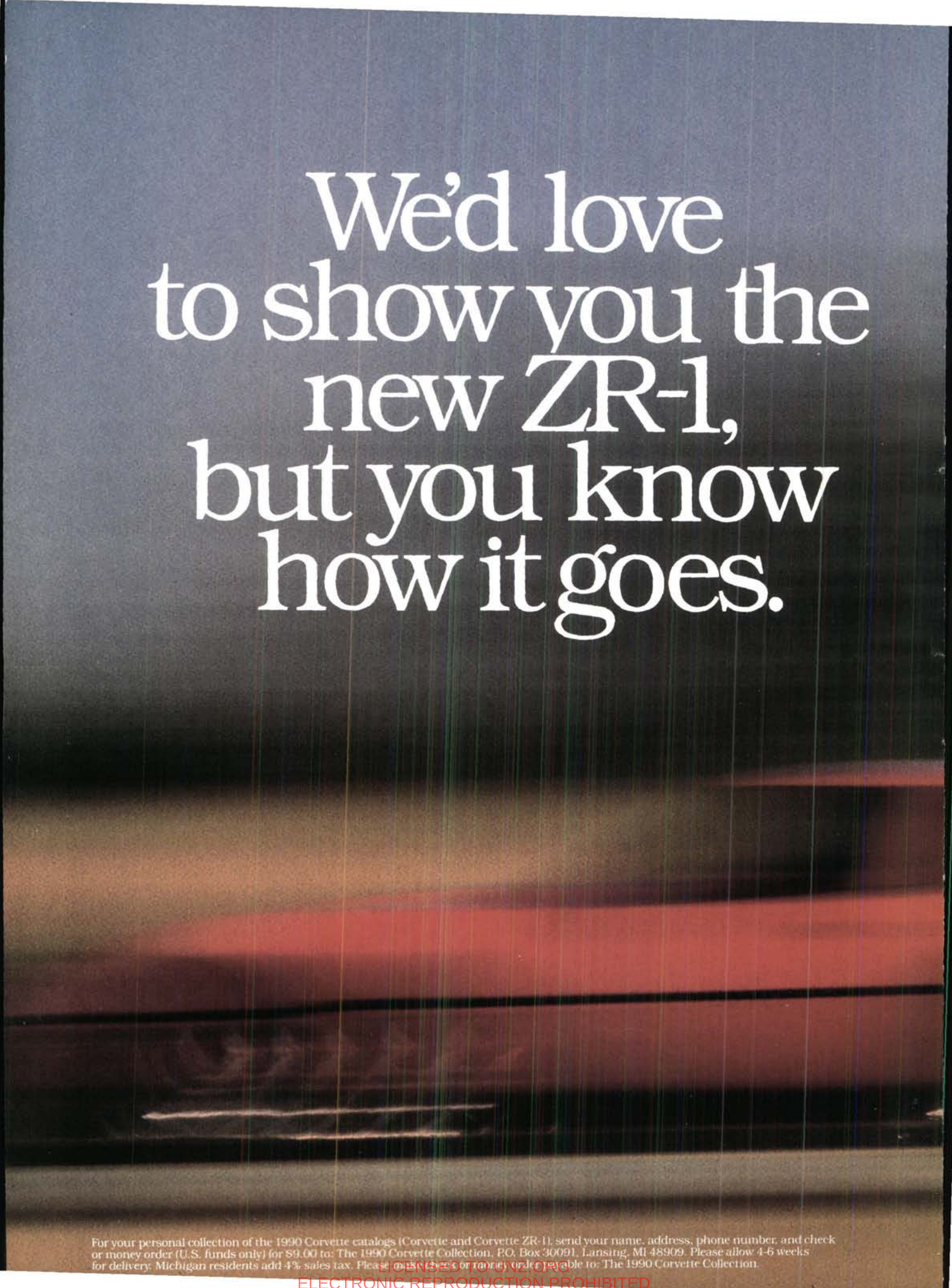
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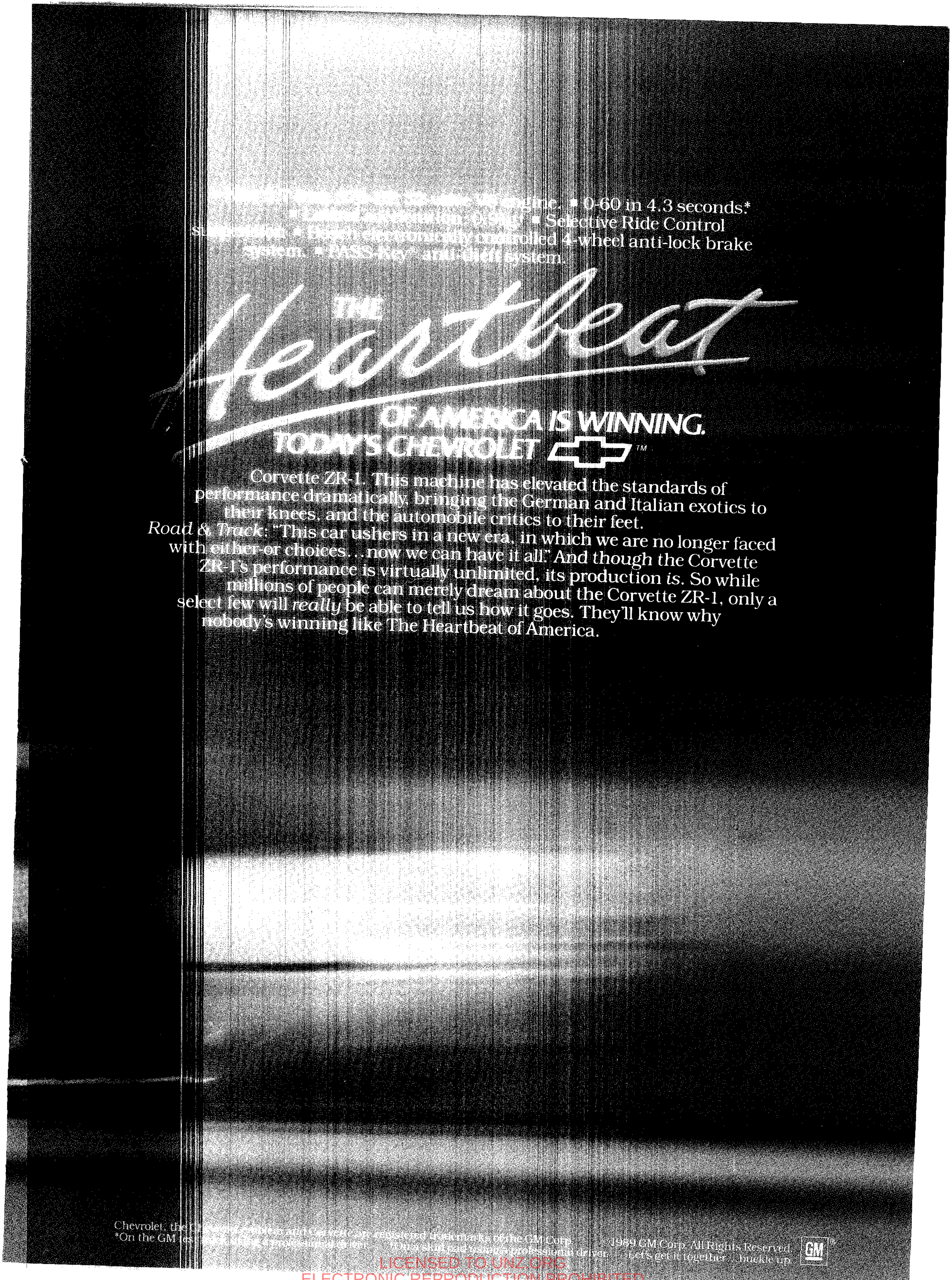

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DRAWINGS: *James Stevenson, Danny Shanahan, Lee Lorenz, Roz Chast, Edward Koren, Richard Cline, Robert Mankoff, William Hamilton, Arnie Levin, Charles Barsotti, Mischa Richter, Alicia Czechowski, George Price, Mort Gerberg, Victoria Roberts*

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THE NEW YORKER (ISSN 0028-792X), published weekly by The New Yorker Magazine, Inc., 25 W. 43rd St., N.Y., N.Y. 10036; Steven T. Florio, president and chief executive officer; Sam R. Spoto, vice-president; Stuart H. Jason, vice-president and treasurer; Ruth A. Diem, vice-president and human resources director; Frank Mustacato, vice-president and circulation director; Virginia L. Jespersen, vice-president and business manager; Lynn Guthrie Heiler, vice-president and advertising director; Matthew D. Roberts, vice-president and marketing director. Branch advertising offices: 111 East Wacker Drive, Chicago, Ill. 60601; 41 Osgood Place, San Francisco, Calif. 94133; Suite 1460, 5900 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90036; 67½ Chestnut St., Boston, Mass. 02108; 19 South Audley St., London, W1Y 5DN. Metropolitan Publishers Representatives: 3017 Piedmont Road, NE, Atlanta, Ga. 30305; 2500 So. Dixie Highway, Miami, Fla. 33133; 3016 Mason Place, Tampa, Fla. 33629; 3 Church St., Suite 503, Toronto, Canada. M5E 1M2. Carol Orr & Co., Publishers Representative: 3300 Oak Lawn, Suite 500, Dallas, Tx. 75219. Vol. LXV, No. 45, December 25, 1989. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. Authorized as second-class mail by the Post Office Department, Ottawa, Canada, and for payment of postage in cash. © 1989 by The New Yorker Magazine, Inc., in the United States and Canada. All rights reserved. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without the consent of *The New Yorker*. The magazine's name, logo, and various titles and headings herein have been registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Printed in U.S.A. Subscription rates: In U.S. and possessions, one year, $32.00; two years, $52.00. In Canada, one year, $50.00. Other foreign, one year, $56.00, payable in advance.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The New Yorker, Box 56447, Boulder, Colorado 80322.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

James Naughton in "City of Angels"

THE THEATRE

THIS month marks the hundredth birthday of Gilbert and Sullivan's "The Gondoliers" (first performance: December 7, 1889); accordingly, it is with a new production of "The Gondoliers" that the New York Gilbert & Sullivan Players, under Albert Bergeret's direction, will open their 1989 season at Symphony Space.

NYGASP's annual visits to Symphony Space are always good news for Gilbert and Sullivan fans, as well as for parents in search of theatre that will neither insult their children's intelligence nor overstimulate them beyond all recognition. "Gondoliers" is particularly fun for kids who are slightly older—eleven to fourteen, say—than your typical "Pirates"-"Pinafore"-"Mikado" audience, or else who are already familiar with those works. Gilbert's story of two humble gondoliers suddenly raised to the station of royalty because one of them (though nobody knows which) happens to be the rightful king of Barataria offers a nice introduction to the concept of social satire—in the same way that exposure to Gilbert and Sullivan is probably a child's best introduction to the idea of literary formula.

Actually, "The Gondoliers" deviates from the standard Gilbertian form—and in a fashion that underscores Gilbert's social point. Alone of the Savoy operas, "The Gondoliers" has three separate sets of heroes and heroines. Apparently, the reason for this was that Gilbert's protégée, Jessie Bond, had asked for a raise. She got her money, but legend has it that Gilbert stopped speaking to Miss Bond during rehearsals except to remark, "Make way for the high-salaried artiste," whenever she came by. In fiction, too, he seems to have made his point; by increasing the number of principals in the company, Gilbert taught his leading lady the lesson learned by the democratic kings of Barataria: "When every one is somebodee, Then no one's anybody!"

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27			

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

The Art of Success—Tim Curry portrays William Hogarth in the American première of a 1986 comedy by Nick Dear. Preview on Dec. 19. Opens Dec. 20 at 8. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

Kingfish—A play by Marlane Meyer, with Buck Henry. Previews Dec. 19-20. Opens Dec. 21 at 7:15. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

Macbeth—Raul Julia has the title role in the twelfth production of the Shakespeare Marathon. Directed by Richard Jordan. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

The Merchant of Venice—Dustin Hoffman heads the cast of this production imported from the West End and directed by Sir Peter Hall. Also with Geraldine James, Leigh Lawson, and Nathaniel Parker. Preview on Dec. 18. Opens Dec. 19 at 6:45. (46th Street Theatre, 226 W. 46th St. 246-0102.)

My Children! My Africa!—John Kani, Courtney B. Vance, and Lisa Fugard in the American première of a play written and directed by Athol Fugard. Presented by the New York Theatre Workshop. Opens Dec. 18 at 8. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 279-4200.)

Negro Ensemble Company—**jonquil** is the most recent work in Charles Fuller's cycle of plays about freed slaves. Directed by Douglas Turner Ward. In previews. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 246-8545.)

New York Gilbert & Sullivan Players—Presenting **the gondoliers.** Opens Dec. 21 at 8, and runs through Jan. 7. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.)

Romance in Hard Times—Lillias White and Cleavant Derricks star in William Finn's musical, which is set in a nineteen-thirties soup kitchen. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

Twenty Fingers, Twenty Toes—Ann Brown and Maura Hanlon play Siamese twins on the vaudeville circuit in this musical by Michael Dansicker and Bob Nigro. In previews. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523.)

NEW THIS SEASON

Adam and the Experts—A play by Victor Bumbalo, with John Finch as a man whose best friend has AIDS. Directed by Nicholas Deutsch. (Apple Corps Theatre, 336 W. 20th St. 564-8038. Closes Dec. 31.)

Artist Descending a Staircase—This topnotch staging (by Tim Luscombe) of a Tom Stoppard play originally written for radio lasts ninety-five minutes and probably offers more amusement and intellectual stimulation than most full-length plays around. Consider the second act the conversation over dinner. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/18/89.) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450.)

A Bronx Tale—A one-man play about growing up on Arthur Avenue and 187th Street. Written and performed by Chazz Palminteri. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000. Closes Dec. 24.)

The Circle—Rex Harrison, Glynis Johns, Stewart Granger, and an able supporting company have raised Somerset Maugham to the heights of Sheridan and Congreve. The play is about an elderly couple who pay a visit to the wife's middle-aged son, whom she deserted thirty years before. Brian Murray directed the fine production. (12/4/89) (Ambassador, 215 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

Circle Repertory Company—The second play of the season is **sunshine**, by William Mastrosimone. John Dossett, Jordan Mott, and Jennifer Jason Leigh make up the cast, which is directed by Marshall W. Mason. (Circle Repertory Company Theatre, 99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100.)

City of Angels—James Naughton and Gregg Edelman in a musical comedy by Larry Gelbart (book), Cy Coleman (score), and David Zippel (lyrics). Directed by Michael Blakemore. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.)

Closer than Ever—This charmer amounts to an anthology of songs and sketches by Richard Maltby, Jr. (words), and David Shire (music), as sung and performed by Brent Barrett, Sally Mayers, Richard Muenz, and Lynne Wintersteller. (11/13/89) (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde—Georg Osterman's version of the strange case, presented by the Ridiculous Theatrical Company. With Mr. Osterman, Everett Quinton, and Eureka, among others. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, One Sheridan Square. 691-2271.)

A Few Good Men—"Mister Roberts" meets "The Mary Tyler Moore Show." Aaron Sorkin's military-courtroom drama treats issues like justice, honor, loyalty, and morality with the slick, facile smugness of a half-hour comedy series, but the performances, by an ace cast under Don Scardino's direction, are wonderful. (11/27/89) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Grand Hotel—The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show, but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. (11/27/89) (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-0102.)

Gypsy—This revival of the great Sondheim-Styne-Laurents-Robbins musical (directed by Arthur Laurents himself) is so delightful—and the cast (led by Tyne Daly, Crista Moore, and Jonathan Hadary) so engaging—that we think anyone would be the happier for having seen it. One suggestion: don't applaud when Mama Rose comes down the aisle (you'll drown out the first number). (12/4/89) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 246-0102.)

Lambs Theatre Company—The sixth annual presentation of **the gifts of the magi**, a musical adapted from two O. Henry short stories. (Little Theatre at the Lambs, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. Closes Dec. 31.)

The Lisbon Traviata—This superb production of Terrence McNally's play about two fanatical opera aficionados (Anthony Heald and Nathan Lane) was staged by John Tillinger, and originated at the Manhattan Theatre Club. Since its run there, McNally has recast the ending so as to make it more plausible, less melodramatic. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

Love Letters—A. R. Gurney's two-character play, with Elizabeth McGovern and Timothy Hutton Dec. 19-24, and Lynn Redgrave and John Clark starting Dec. 26. (Edison, 240 W. 47th St. 302-2302.)

Meet Me in St. Louis—If you like the old M-G-M musical, you probably won't like this stage version, which combines the earnest, wholesome values of the movie with an aesthetic of surpassing vulgarity. In any case, why see the show when you can rent the movie? (11/20/89) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.)

Mountain Language and **The Birthday Party**—This Pinter double bill, directed by Carey Perloff, offers a chance to see the work of the much lionized British playwright as it should be produced. The first play is an American première, the second a revival of the production CSC presented last year, with one notable cast change—Jean Stapleton in the role of Meg. The actors, with the exception of Peter Riegert, are all superb, particularly Miss Stapleton and David Strathairn, who give brilliantly complex performances. (CSC, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210. Closes Dec. 23.)

Oh, Hell—A double bill consisting of Shel Silverstein's "The Devil and Billy Markham"

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Peabody Awards for broadcast excellence went to *Bill Moyers' In Search of the Constitution* and to the mini-series *George Washington.* GM completed the rare look at America's first presidency with the sequel, *George Washington: The Forging of a Nation;* and we presented Moyers' unprecedented interview of retiring Chief Justice William Burger.

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THE THEATRE—Cont'd

and David Mamet's "Bobby Gould in Hell." (Reviewed in this issue.) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Closes Dec. 31.)

Sweeney Todd—Bob Gunton and Beth Fowler in the York Theatre Company's production of the Sondheim musical. Susan H. Schulman is the director. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

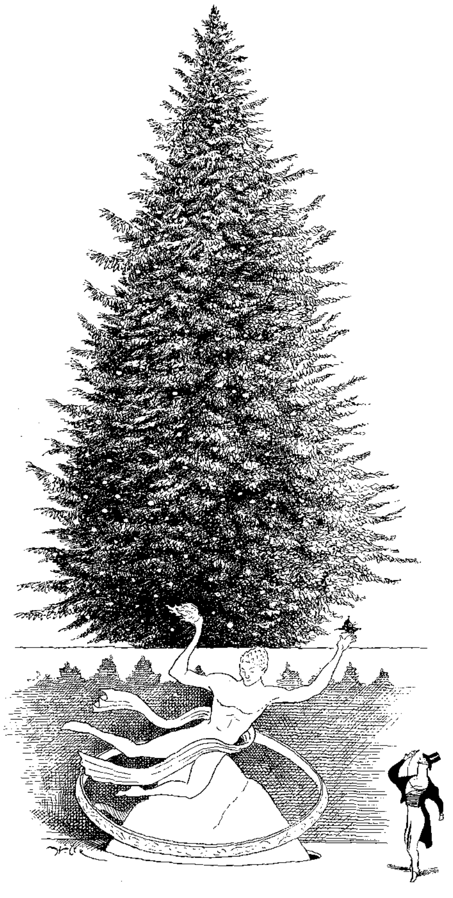
The Tenth Man—A revival of Paddy Chayefsky's 1959 play, directed by Ulu Grosbard. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

3 Penny Opera—Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht's savage fable of bourgeois capitalism packaged as a vehicle for a rock star. Were it not for the casting of Sting in the role of Macheath, John Dexter's revival would be exactly like a school production. (11/20/89) (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 246-0102. Closes Dec. 31.)

Tru—Robert Morse in a one-man play about Truman Capote, written and directed by Jay Presson Allen. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

BLACK AND BLUE: An evening of classic blues and jazz, conceived, designed, and directed by Claudio Segovia and Héctor Orezzoli, who created "Tango Argentino" in a similarly commemorative but far less visually opulent style. Musicians of renown have been assembled, and while Ruth Brown, Linda Hopkins, and Carrie Smith sing, Bunny Briggs, Jimmy Slyde, and a troupe of hoofers young and old give the tap-dance subculture a workout. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.) . . . **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **A CHORUS LINE:** A group of young dancers audition for a handful of chorus jobs in a show not yet in rehearsal, and by the time the evening is over we know everything about all of them. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **DRIVING MISS DAISY:** Frances Sternhagen and Arthur French star in Alfred Uhry's play, which tells of the growing attachment of a cranky old woman in Atlanta to her black chauffeur. Directed by Ron Lagomarsino. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run turned twenty-nine this year. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1989:** A source of continual merriment, this revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **THE HEIDI CHRONICLES:** Wendy Wasserstein's play looks at first glance like standard baby-boom playwriting fare, but some alchemical combination of graceful-mindedness and good writing enables her to capture, lampoon, and transcend her generation all at the same time. With Christine Lahti. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **JEROME ROBBINS' BROADWAY:** A collection of high spots from "On the Town," "Billion Dollar Baby," "High Button Shoes," "The King and I," "Peter Pan," "West Side Story," "Gypsy," "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," and "Fiddler on the Roof," all of which were choreographed or directed, or both, by Jerome Robbins. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **LEND ME A TENOR:** The setting of this farce by Ken Ludwig is a hotel suite in Cleveland in 1934, where a famous tenor who is booked to sing "Otello" takes an overdose of barbiturates. A substitute must be found. Under Jerry Zaks' direction, all the surprises up the dramatist's sleeve are brought to comic life. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **M. BUTTERFLY:** Tony Randall and A. Mapa in David Henry Hwang's funny, mysterious, and often beautiful play. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220.) . . . **ME AND MY GIRL:** An infelicitously rehabilitated British musical out of the thirties. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 246-0102. Closes Dec. 31.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.) . . . **ONLY KIDDING!:** Jim Geoghan's comedy about standup comedians, in all their panic and desperation, has the ring of authenticity, and jokes that invariably pay off. With Ralph Macchio. (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394.) . . . **OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY:** Jerry Sterner's comedy about a New York stockbroker's attempt to take over a decorous New England business maintains its suspense from beginning to end. With Kevin Conway and Mercedes Ruehl. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.) . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** The much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **RUMORS:** This farce about a party to celebrate a couple's tenth anniversary (the host and hostess are mysteriously absent) may well be the funniest play that Neil Simon has written. Directed by Gene Saks. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.) . . . **STEEL MAGNOLIAS:** This first play by Robert Harling takes place in a beauty shop in a small town in Louisiana and consists mainly of the often amusing, wisecracking chatter of the proprietress, her assistant, and four steady customers. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 246-0102.)



CELLO MAN

The mechanical dolls in midtown store windows at holiday time are designed to entice by reminding passersby of their secret fantasies: to dress up in Victorian clothes, to enter the world of a fairy tale, to receive an embossed invitation to a New Year's Eve party. This year, however, we were more taken with Bendel's windows, where the mannequins are dressed in tutus and cashmere sweaters and have rivers of gold stars for hair. We also liked the cello man at Gucci with the drumset knees, and the tinfoil-wrapped maiden in the "Virgo" window at Barneys.

The best windows don't try so hard to make us nostalgic for a time we don't remember or wishful for an affluence we'll never attain, and most of them are downtown. Think Big displays a tripod of enormous Kelly-green Crayolas sitting under a rain of red and white Styrofoam balls. The people at Broadway Panhandler have filled mixing bowls with pine cones. At EMS there's a kayak wrapped with a big ribbon and a multi-colored, person-size stack of red down-filled booties. And on a very cold night recently Chappy's Variety, on Broadway, had decked its holiday display of thermal underwear and 3-M weather stripping with generous bunches of red and white plastic flowers. Inspired by the display's warm possibilities, we went inside and bought two pairs of long johns and a jumbo tube of toothpaste.

DANCE

CERTAIN forms of theatrical dancing—classical ballet, Kabuki—must be produced on a grand scale. Reduced too far, they become another species entirely. Flamenco dancing is the opposite: without intimacy and directness, it loses its identity. Pared down as far as a singer, a guitarist, and a dancer, it gives you the art in its essential form. With two dancers—a man and a woman—it conveys the essence and the drama. In fact, there is so much drama just in the sequential exhibition of masculine and feminine flamenco solos that narrative frames and descriptive atmospheres usually make the dancing seem forced, even kitsch. We were reminded of what flamenco could be by the recent, unpretentious recital at Town Hall of Paco Peña, the distinguished flamenco guitarist from Córdoba, with a few of his Spanish colleagues. The dancers numbered three women (a mature virtuosa and two phenomenally beautiful juniors) and two men. One of the men, who went by the single name of Raul, gave the most spellbinding display of footwork to be seen on a New York stage since the solos of Antonio Gades in 1985; by the end, people were screaming and hyperventilating like the teen-agers at early Beatles concerts. When "Flamenco Puro" was here several years ago, audiences became excited by the understated wit and elegance of the performers. But what they were screaming about at Town Hall was the way *athletic* prowess was transmuted into pure musical expression.

Pure flamenco is not uniquely Spanish. The New Mexican native María Benítez is respected for her commitment to musical values, as well as for her virtuosity. She and her company of dancers and musicians are performing two different programs at the Joyce, through December 23. Her numbers will include several solos for her and a solo for a company member, Rosa Mercedes, by Rosita Segovia, the longtime partner of the legendary Antonio.

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DANCE—Cont'd

NEW YORK CITY BALLET—Performances of "The Nutcracker" are being presented through Dec. 31. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Dec. 19-21 at 6; Dec. 22 at 8; Dec. 23 at 2 and 8; Dec. 24 at 1 and 5; and Dec. 26-27 at 6. The company's winter season continues through Feb. 25.)

ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATRE—Dec. 19 at 8: "Come and Get the Beauty of It Hot," "The Road of the Phoebe Snow," and "The Stack-Up." . . . ¶ Dec. 20 at 8: "Streams," "Sarong Paramaribo," "After Eden," and "For Bird with Love." . . . ¶ Dec. 21 at 8: "Night Creature," "Journey," "Rainbow 'Round My Shoulder," and "Suite Otis." . . . ¶ Dec. 22 at 8, Dec. 23 at 2 and 8, and Dec. 24 at 3: "The Magic of Katherine Dunham." . . . ¶ Dec. 26 at 8: "Landscape," "Masekela Langage," and "Revelations." . . . ¶ Dec. 27 at 8: "Come and Get the Beauty of It Hot," "The Road of the Phoebe Snow," and "The Stack-Up." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. Through Dec. 31.)

MARÍA BENÍTEZ SPANISH DANCE COMPANY—Final performances of the engagement. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Program B: Dec. 19 and Dec. 22 at 8. . . . ¶ Program A: Dec. 20-21 at 8, and Dec. 23 at 2 and 7:30.)

NIGHT LIFE

KILIMANJARO is a brand-new night club in far-west Chelsea, set in a long, low brick building—with an equally long salmon awning—that looks at first glance like an automobile showroom or maybe a suburban bowling alley. The club is owned by the same people who own the popular Washington, D.C., night spot of the same name, and here, as there, the main business is African music—though there will also be calypso, reggae, and other world-beat acts. The décor makes gestures toward Africa, too—a stretched python skin, some beautiful zebra pelts—but in appearance this is essentially a big (twelve thousand square feet), polished, generic disco. Perhaps because of the club's internationalist climate, bizarre things can happen here, as we discovered when we stopped in recently to hear the Zairian pop singer Pépé Kallé. Among Kallé's supporting talent was Dancing Emoro, billed as "Africa's most applauded Pygmy dancer." Emoro, who is diminutive even by Pygmy standards and who was got up in black shirt and pants, gold chains, and wire-rimmed glasses, danced and grinned and walked on his hands, and not only was he applauded but some people even slipped him dollar bills, as if he were a Chippendales stripper. Kallé called onstage three young miniskirted women from the audience, who performed a dance sometimes called "How low can you go?" Emoro, in a burst of enthusiasm, persuaded one of the women to go as low as the floor, flat on her back, and then he did something that reminded us of a frisky wheaten terrier we once owned. One of the other women tried to pry off the Pygmy, but he wouldn't budge. Kallé, who has apparently worked with Emoro before, smiled benignly, as if to say, "It's O.K. He just likes you."

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which bold-face type is used to pick out a few of the more notable peformers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that, especially around holiday time, are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

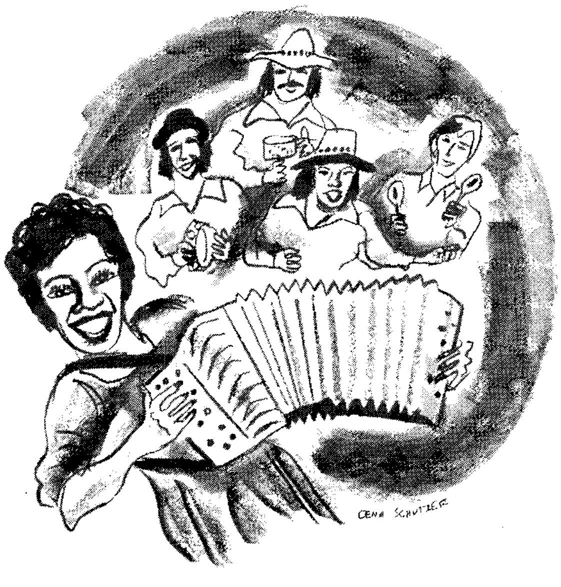
ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—In the lobby, people come and go talking of the Forty-fourth Street Marching and Chowder Club, which used to meet here, and of Lerner and Loewe, who knocked out "My Fair Lady" here, and of **MARY CLEERE HARAN**—a young San Francisco-born singer whose heart belongs to the Gershwins, Rodgers and Hart, and others, and who's currently at work in the woody nook known as the Oak Room. Ms. Haran's performances begin at nine-fifteen; at eleven-fifteen, singer **LILIANE MONTEVECCHI**, whose "day job" is a role in "Grand Hotel" on Broadway, begins a set of her own. Dining.

BALLROOM, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A big, soigné cabaret on the edge of Chelsea, in the heart of the fur and fashion-student districts. Jimmy Webb and Judy Kaye perform Dec. 22-23, at nine and eleven, respectively. A singing and tap-dancing trio called the Manhattan Rhythm Kings get a two-week engagement under way on Dec. 26. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine and Sundays at two. Closed Dec. 24-25.

BIRDLAND, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—The jazz personnel turns over nearly every night at this airy, loftlike restaurant-bar, in the gray zone between Zabar's and Columbia. Some may cry gentrification at the sight of the pastel walls, the potted greenery, and the bar crowded with Frascati sippers, but the floor-to-ceiling windows make for some fine Broadway-viewing. The Byron Stripling quintet claims Dec. 20; saxophonist **SONNY FORTUNE** sets up shop Dec. 21-23; and the Bill Charlap trio works out on Dec. 26. Music from nine Sundays through Thursdays and from nine-thirty Fridays and Saturdays. Dining. Closed Dec. 24-25.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—A jazz club that would be a perfect stop on a bus tour (there's even a souvenir shop that sells Kodak). It's a good idea to make a reservation and show up *well* in advance. **QUEEN IDA & THE BON TEMPS ZYDECO BAND**—a shuffling, non-fancy bayou-blues outfit in which Her Majesty sings and plays accordion—will be here through Dec. 23. The **PETE YELLIN ALL-STARS** come in Dec. 24-25. Keyboardist **HERBIE HANCOCK**, who acted in and wrote the score for the movie "Round Midnight" (and won an Oscar for the musical contribution), leads a trio as of Dec. 26. First set at nine. Dining.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A vast room where they pack them in until someone says uncle. The walls and columns are basic black with some rainbow detailing here and there—the place is pleasant enough, but it looks a little like the outside of a van. Singer-pianist **LAURA NYRO**, whose songs have been covered by everyone from Three Dog Night to Frank Sinatra, will be here Dec. 22; the **TURTLES**, who are happy *and* together, start up on Dec. 27. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster. Closed Dec. 24-26.



Queen Ida & the Bon Temps Zydeco Band at the Blue Note

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar, tucked between a D'Agostino supermarket and a greengrocery. In 1969, when the late Bradley Cunningham and a partner bought it, it was called the Stirrup. Its light is distinctive, something between dim generic tavern light and refined haze; its patrons are famously gabby; its piano, which Paul Desmond bequeathed to Mr. Cunningham, has been played by many first-rate musicians, including Jimmy Rowles, Tommy Flanagan, and Dave McKenna. **KENNY BARRON** sits down at the bench Dec. 18-23; **BEN RILEY** and **RAY DRUMMOND** make it a trio. **JOHN HICKS** is the pianist on Dec. 24, with **ELISE WOOD** and **WALTER BOOKER.** Beginning Dec. 25, **KIRK LIGHTSEY** and **DON PATE** are in charge. Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

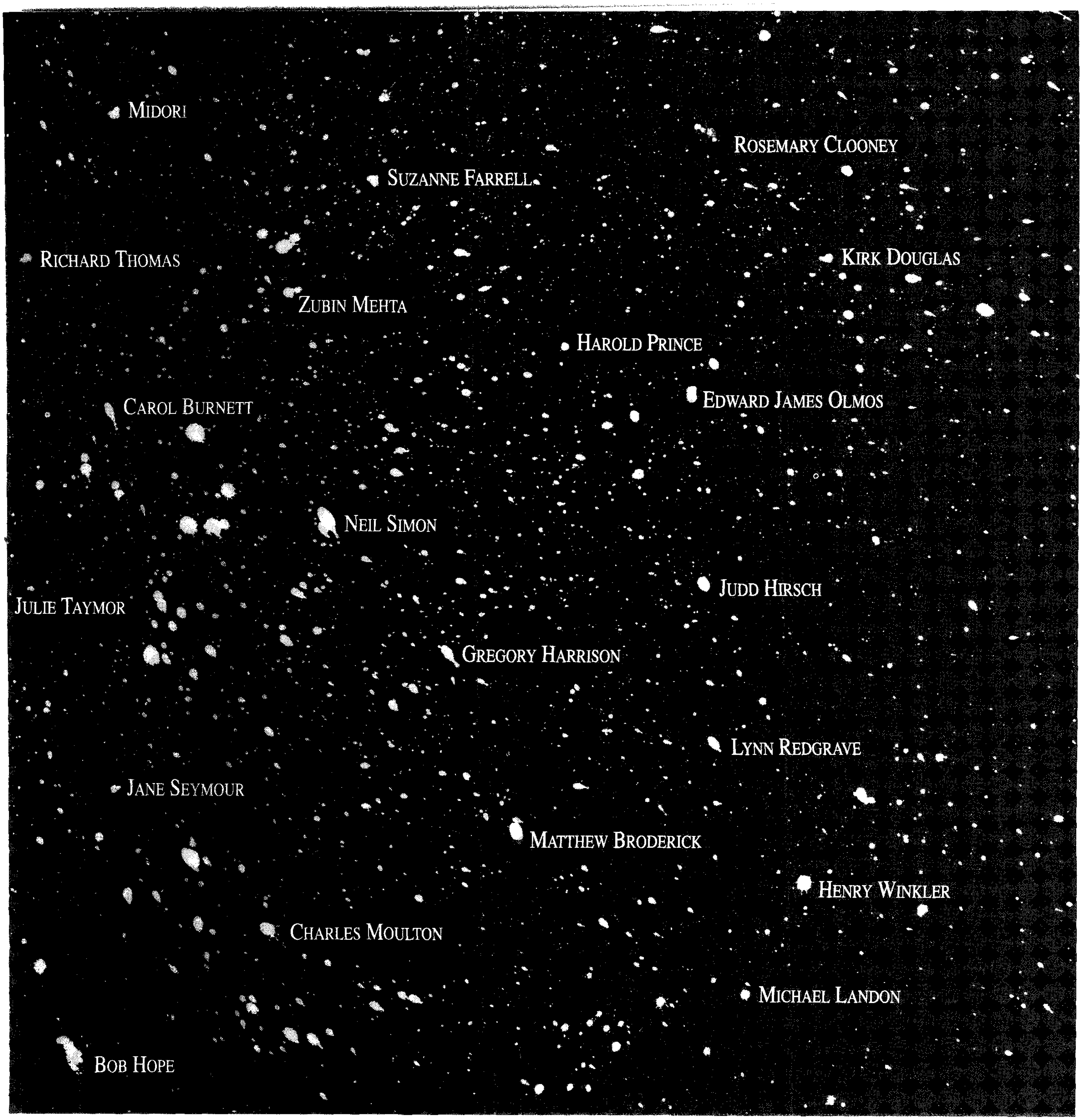
CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a small, well-upholstered room decorated with quaint Marcel Vertès murals (a nude at her easel, a leaping poodle), is a place where time pretty much stands still. Singer and pianist **BOBBY SHORT**, who played here in 1968, liked it, and decided to stay, is in action Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in a bar whose pillars and walls are decorated with Ludwig Bemelmans park scenes (a man and his bulldog, rabbity creatures at play, schoolchildren and a nun), **BARBARA CARROLL** can be found at the piano from nine-forty-five Tuesdays through Saturdays.

DELTA 88, 332 Eighth Ave., at 26th St. (924-3499)—A long, rambling bar and restaurant with a white-trash-chicken-shack theme. The decorator went kind of hog-wild with all the old filling-station and soft-drink signs and the hubcaps and the dime-store portrait of the King and the display of dozer caps and the shingle from the taxidermist in Spanish Fort, Alabama—but it's a friendly enough place. There's live music to be heard most nights, including gospel on Mondays, zydeco on Thursdays, and country on Fridays. Shows after nine. Chicken-fried steak, deep-fried crawdads (a.k.a. Cajun popcorn), glasses of water big enough to put out a brushfire, and other exotic Southern fare. Closed Dec. 24-25.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—There's not a lot of elbow- or headroom in this downstairs jazz club, but the musicians sometimes make you forget all about it. In 1957, bop pianist **TOSHIKO AKIYOSHI** told this magazine that the States were "too fast" for her and that once her studies at the Berklee School of Music were completed she planned to return to Japan to teach. Thirty years later, she is still here, leading her joyous big band and getting misty-eyed about Bud Powell. Ms. Akiyoshi and her band wind up six nights' work on Dec. 24. **ANITA O'DAY**, a jazz, scat, and boogie-woogie pro, who sang with the Gene Krupa big band in the forties and who can still mix it up, steps up to the mike on Dec. 26, for the first performance of a week-long engagement. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL**, the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

FORTUNE GARDEN PAVILION, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—A satisfying combination of Chinese food and homegrown music. Rubberneckers may see the moon wheeling by the greenhouse roof on its regular tour of romantic Manhattan. The pianists who pass through here are among Gotham's finest. **ROY MERIWETHER** and **BARRY CAMPBELL** work together Dec. 19-24; beginning Dec. 26, **RUBY BRAFF** teams up with **HOWARD ALDEN, JACK LESBERG,** and **RICHARD WYANDS.** Music from eight Mondays through Saturdays, and from seven on Sundays. Open Christmas, sans music.

GONZALEZ Y GONZALEZ, 625 Broadway, at Houston St. (473-8787)—Loud, brash, and big—de rigueur for the lower-Broadway dining scene. The theme is, of course, Mexican, and you get the whole enchilada—a giant cactus here, a parade-float sombrero there, animal skulls, religious artifacts, and jalapeño clusters everywhere. The musicians do their work


MIDORI
ROSEMARY CLOONEY
SUZANNE FARRELL
RICHARD THOMAS
KIRK DOUGLAS
ZUBIN MEHTA
HAROLD PRINCE
CAROL BURNETT
EDWARD JAMES OLMOS
NEIL SIMON
JUDD HIRSCH
JULIE TAYMOR
GREGORY HARRISON
LYNN REDGRAVE
JANE SEYMOUR
MATTHEW BRODERICK
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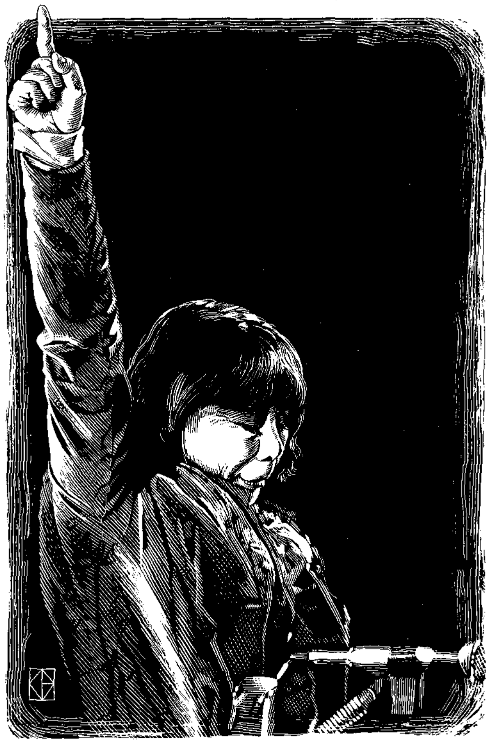
NIGHT LIFE–Cont'd

on a stage in the rear, about a city block from the entrance.

Greene Street, 101 Greene St. (925-2415)—This is such a gorgeous, thirties-ish movie set of a place, you expect gunmen to burst in at any moment. The restaurant and bar—which is forested and twilit—is about the size of a football field, with the piano at the fifty-yard line. If your seats are good enough, you'll hear some able entertainers, including pianists **LYNN BERNSTEIN** (Dec. 24) and **HAL SCHAEFER** (beginning Dec. 26). Closed Christmas.



Toshiko Akiyoshi at Fat Tuesday's

Indigo Blues, 221 W. 46th St. (221-0033)—A sleek, modern jazz club, in the basement of the Hotel Edison, with glass brick, space-age carpeting, and long strips of cool-blue neon. The veteran Memphis R. & B. and blues singer **BOBBY (BLUE) BLAND,** who once worked as B. B. King's valet, holds forth Dec. 21-22. Closed Dec. 25-26.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—An Old New York kind of place, with dark-wood panelling, white tablecloths, and brass-figurine lamps. The musicians gather around the Steinway that sits in the dining room, next to a brass-railed partition, but chin music is often the dominant sound. Stride pianist **JUDY CARMICHAEL,** from whom one might hear, say, a cheery rendition of "Them There Eyes," performs with saxophonist **MICHAEL HASHIM** Dec. 19-23; pianist **JUNIOR MANCE** and bassist **MARTY RIVERA** start up on Dec. 26. Music from nine-thirty. Open, but silent, on Christmas.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—Situated in a neighborhood that boasts the Puck Building to the west and a host of windshield washers to the east, this modest space provides a forum for free-thinking musicians—beat and melody are optional, "music" and "noise" relative terms. **CECIL TAYLOR,** an avant-garde pianist with a percussive style and a tendency to rough up the instrument, is here Dec. 22-23. Dec. 24 belongs to the Rod Williams trio; Dec. 26 to Zorn Flakes (featuring John Zorn); and Dec. 27 to the Jemeel Moondoc Orchestra, among others. Music after nine.

Lauterbach's Brooklyn Beat, 335 Prospect Ave., at Sixth Ave., Brooklyn. (1-718 788-9140)—A grungy but well-intentioned watering hole devoted to homegrown Brooklyn bands. The emphasis here is on exposed cement, although one wall is decorated with Polaroids—"St. Patty's 1986" (people in green hats and leis), "New Year's 1988-89" (people in red hats and leis). Lauterbach's microwave menu includes shepherd's pie and chicken parmigiana, but the musical menu is almost always a better bet.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—A good sound system, cheap drinks, and a regular-guy atmosphere make this restaurant-bar, home of the "Hoboken sound" and of the phrase "jangly guitars," a popular hangout for musicians and their followers. Manhattanites who stay through the second set will need all their Scout training to get home, but the smell of the nearby Maxwell House factory will no doubt give them a boost.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A midtown restaurant and jazz lair for the tasselled-loafers set. The dark, sombre bar (carved-wood lions, iron grillwork) looks like a place you'd find in London's financial district; the dining room—putting-green carpet, lime-green leather banquettes, panelled ceiling—has more of a country-club feel. **HAROLD NICHOLAS** is currently offering a song-and-dance tribute to Mr. Fred Astaire. Closed Sundays.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A big, cheerful room, painted a light tropical blue, where you can pick 'em up and set 'em down to sounds from Brazil, Africa, the Caribbean, and elsewhere. Ample seating for the contemplative. **BABA OLATUNJI,** a Nigerian musician who showed the West how to play drums African style, shows up on Dec. 27. Other events: the reggae sounds of **SUGAR MINOTT** Dec. 19-21; Les Super Stars, a Haitian group, on Dec. 22; Crazy on Dec. 23; and Kimati Dinizulu on Dec. 26. Music from nine Tuesdays through Thursdays and from ten on Fridays and Saturdays. Dining. Closed Christmas.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Drummer, father-figure, and hard-bop kingpin **ART BLAKEY**—whose outfit, the **JAZZ MESSENGERS,** has over the years been one of jazz's most prestigious finishing schools—performs in this Village temple of jazz (pressed-tin ceiling, grainy black-and-white photos of your favorite demigods, knee-to-knee seating) Tuesdays through Sundays. The electrified big band that the late Gil Evans used to bring here—it shimmered a little and rumbled a lot, while Evans, a hands-off conductor, let his soloists blow at length—is now under the direction of his son, trumpeter Miles Evans, and is in action on Mondays. Shows from ten. Dining.

Sweetwaters, 170 Amsterdam Ave., at 67th St. (873-4100)—Pink carnations on the tables, shrimp creole on the menu, a sunken dance floor with a "Saturday Night Fever" ball, and a house photographer who offers to take a picture of you and your lady. The stage, dominated by a white grand piano, is usually given over to soul and R. & B.; the audience shouts encouragement as the band sings about "doin' it all night long" and "takin' care of that thang." There's a lively bar, too, separated from the dining room by tinted glass. **BILLY PAUL,** who hit the top of the soul charts back in 1972 with "Me and Mrs. Jones," performs Dec. 21-23. With Liz Hogue Dec. 22-23.

Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—The gym-size downstairs room—which, with its black walls, black pillars, and black pipes and ducts, resembles a giant Nevelson sculpture—belongs, Dec. 22-23, to two singers: at eight, the powerful gospel belter **MARION WILLIAMS**; and, at ten and midnight, **RONNIE SPECTOR,** who sang "Be My Baby" and other CBS-FM select cuts with the Wall of Sound girl group the Ronettes. . . . ¶ One flight up, in the airy space known as the Terrace Bar, **HERMAN FOSTER** tickles the ivories starting Dec. 19. Closed Dec. 24-25.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—People from all over the world descend the stairs to this ancient jazz club; many of them later emerge from it in an excited condition. Ralph Moore's quintet will be here through Dec. 24; on Dec. 26, bassist **CHARLIE HADEN** begins a week-long gig with his Liberation Music Orchestra. Mondays are prime time for **MEL LEWIS'S** big band. Music from ten.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Two floors of no-nuke-veggie entertainment and consciousness-raising. Listen to bands play in the Summer of Love-muralled back room; buy a tie-dyed T-shirt at the Volkswagen-bus curio shop; catch up on current events at the bulletin board and community calendar. Or, if you'd rather just be mellow, crash out in the basement hippie love pad. Blues Traveler will be here on Dec. 23, Faith on Dec. 25, Zen Tricksters on Dec. 26, and Raging Slab on Dec. 27. Closed Dec. 24.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—If you like pictures of cows, there's a good one here, by the British painter Malcolm Morley, of some Holsteins adrift in a Turneresque landscape. There's also jazz, which flows peaceably from a passageway between the front-room bar and the back-room restaurant. Pianist **KIRK LIGHTSEY** and bassist **CECIL MC BEE** are in residence through Dec. 23. Music weeknights from eight, and Sundays from seven. Closed Christmas.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

FULL-SCALE, drag-the-white-fox-along-the-red-carpet movie premières have become as scarce in Los Angeles as a livable-air-quality index, so no wonder, when Tri-Star hosted its gala American Film Institute benefit world première of "Glory," here at the Ziegfeld, it was no trouble getting a theatreful of swells to turn up in black tie. Women had a little more aggravation, however. Feminine formalwear and movie theatres have compatability problems. When the wife of the film's producer took her seat, her gown's voluminous drop-waist skirt cascaded so it looked as if she were sitting atop a black atomic cloud—you knew her exit would sweep the row's floor clean. And there were so many furs flying in that a radical animal-rights group could have depleted a month's supply of pig's blood in an evening. Not on the fire-engine-red faux-fur coat of the publisher Leonard Stern's wife, Alison, however—Stern said it cost "only four hundred dollars. Can you believe it? She won't wear fur."

"Glory" is about the freemen, newly freed slaves, poor sharecroppers, and runaway slaves who formed the first black infantry, during the Civil War. With appropriateness worthy of Hollywood, the gala dinner was on the Metropolitan Opera House's grand tier, which was ecumenically festooned with American *and* Confederate flags. When we walked in, the band was playing a favorite Civil War song of ours, "Mountain Greenery." Going up the curved staircase, a press agent was saying to a Tri-Star executive, "I think what I like most about the film was that it was so cinematic."

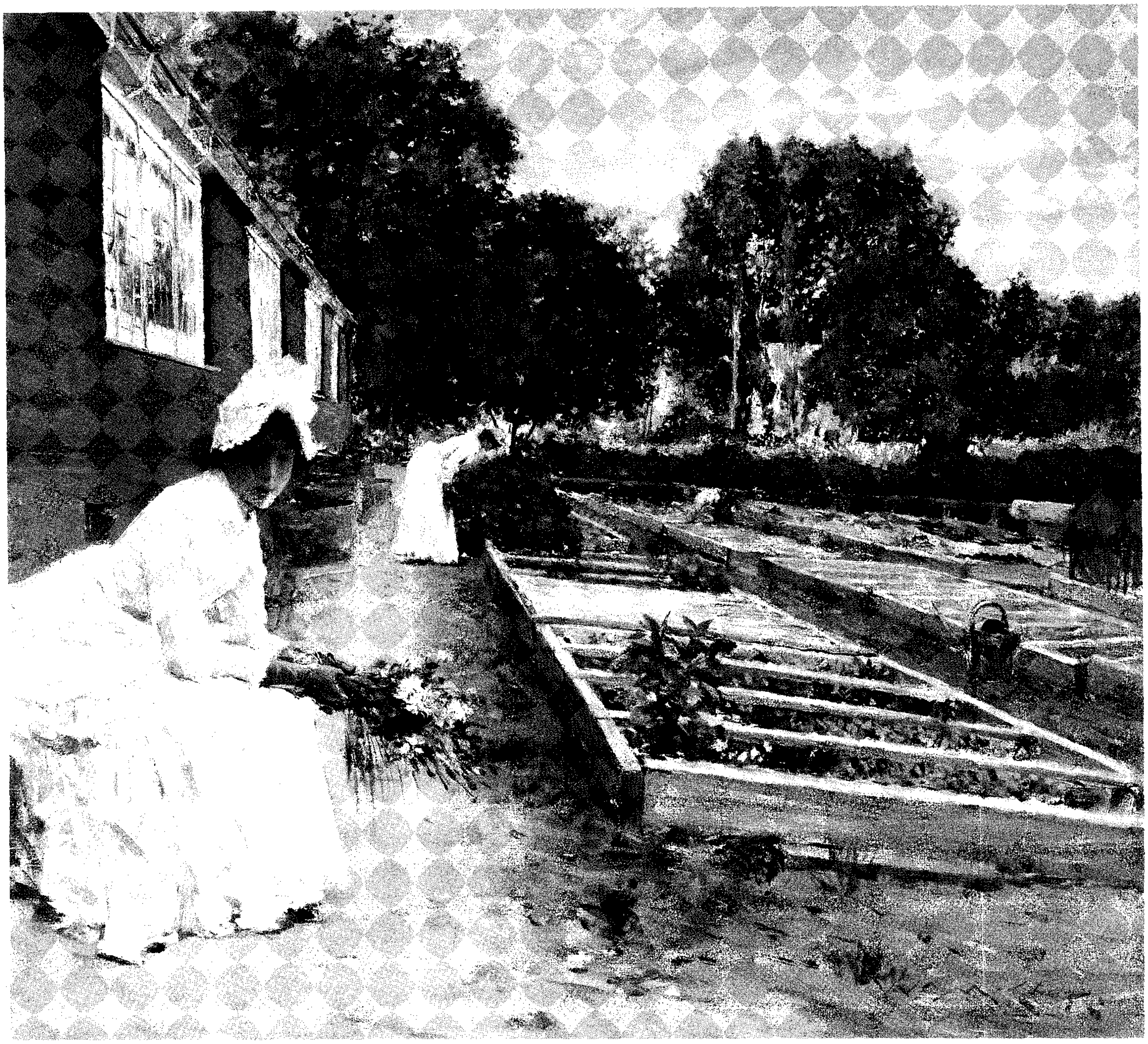
When the band struck up "La Bamba," we knew it was time to surrender. On our way out, a woman walked up to "Glory" 's top-billed Matthew Broderick, and with her eyes beaming said, "Everyone has been talking about you since I got here, so I'm going to tell everyone else tomorrow about how fabulous we all think you are. And I can't wait to see the film."

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

Big Apple Circus—Performances under the little big top in Lincoln Center's Damrosch Park continue through Jan. 7. For ticket and schedule information, call 391-0760.

Radio City Music Hall—Performances of the "Christmas Spectacular" (with the Rockettes, of course) continue through Jan. 3. (Sixth Ave. at 50th St. For information about show times and tickets, call 247-4777.)

American Paintings from the Manoogian Collection



William Merritt Chase, The Nursery, 1890, oil on panel, The Manoogian Collection

The 19th Century paintings in the Manoogian Collection include Hudson River landscapes, trompe l'oeil still lifes, impressionist landscapes, portraits, and genre scenes.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art

December 19 – February 25

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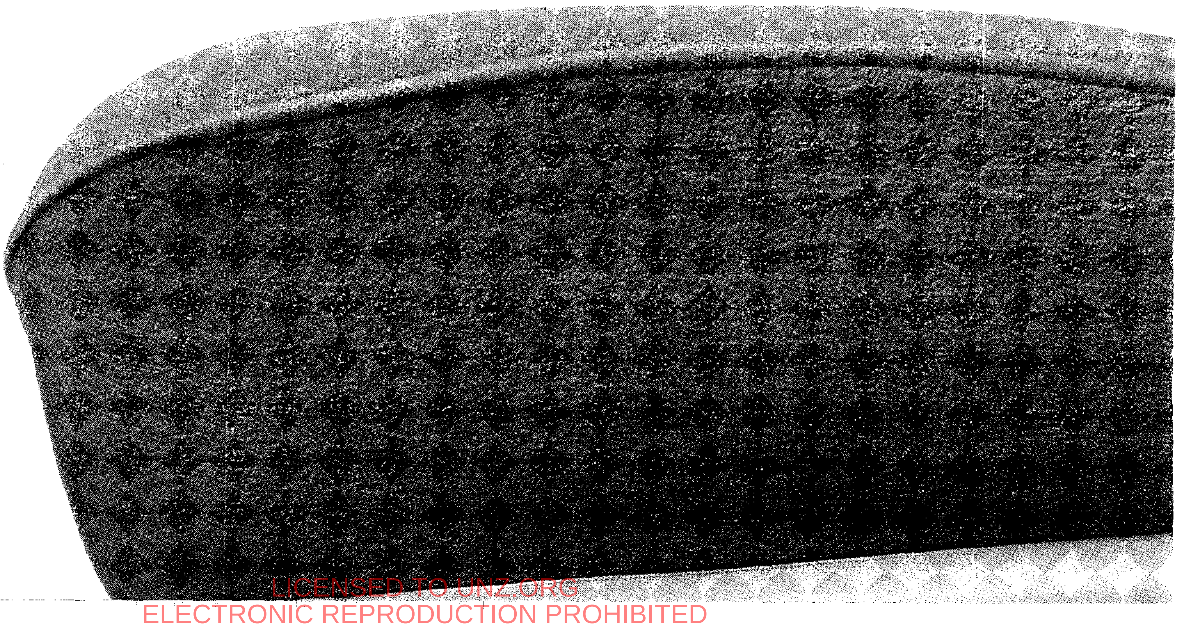

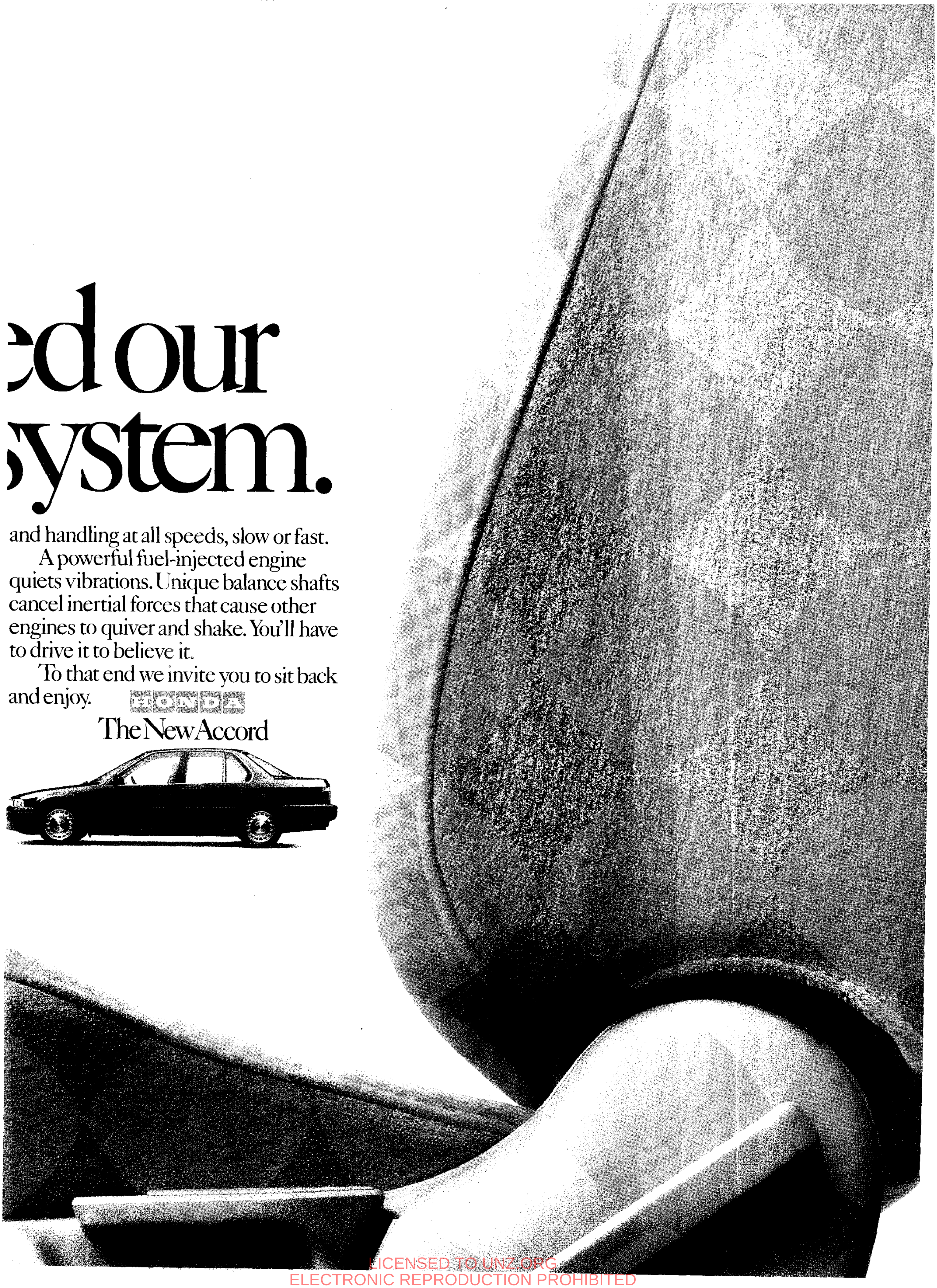

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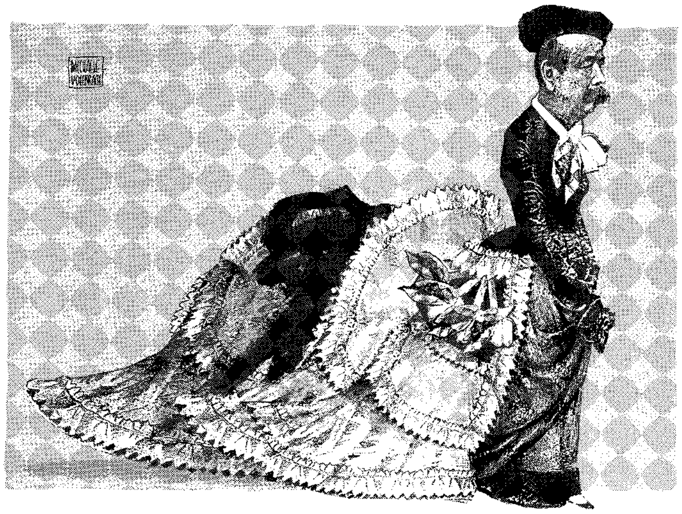


Charles Frederick Worth at the Brooklyn Museum

ART

A LOT of artists are "doing" animals these days. Sometimes the plight of beasts (and, by easy inference, man's cruelty to man) is an overt theme—most notably, in Sue Coe's brilliant anthropomorphic and traditional recent "Porkopolis" series. Julian Barnes' novel "A History of the World in 10½ Chapters" casts animals in a similar way—the story of Noah's Ark, for instance, is told from a stowaway woodworm's point of view. With Julian Schnabel, the beast is a more changeable creature. A few years ago, for example, the artist's signature style consisted of madly rugged spotted cowskin paintings, some with antlers, which seemed either to commemorate or to explode the fashion for trophies that characterized Teddy Roosevelt's age. You might also have argued that in these works animals assumed sacrificial Christian roles, and were understudies, perhaps, for St. Sebastian, whom Schnabel "identified" with strongly at the time. In his new series of loose and broadly gestural compositions on red velvet, currently at the Pace Gallery, one sentence—"There is no place on this planet more horrible than a fox farm during pelting season"—is painstakingly and ubiquitously repeated. It is a phrase that, according to the gallery, had been scribbled on some paper currency that Schnabel was given as change. While entirely consistent with the artist's attraction to hagiography and, more generally, to operatic pathos—his martyrs, for instance, have included Maria Callas—this aleatory sentiment has precious little to do with animals in any direct sense. It is, literally, a "found" emotion that triggered Schnabel's high-flown imagination.

In the strange case of David Mach, a London-based Scot born in 1956, who now has a show at Barbara Toll, animals are represented as eternal bit players: abiding familiars in a wacky world. Mach is an inspired absurdist. On the walls at Toll, we find such believe-it-or-nots as a fibreglass hippopotamus head with an actual washing machine wedged into its mouth, and a taxidermic deer's head with a bicycle festooning it. These could be time-capsule trophies from after the next really big quake—now frozen results of zoo inhabitants that have been hurled into an appliance showroom. Mach's mind has definitely broken through to Mach 2.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—The Canaletto show, devoted to one of history's most repetitive artists, is way, way too big. In a dozen galleries we find, for the most part, eighteenth-century Venice looking perfectly like her Serenissima self. A little Canaletto is great and it goes a long way, and the occasional magical work, such as "S. Cristoforo, S. Michele, and Murano from the Fondamente Nuove, Venice"—an atypical (dark and moody) view whose theatrical interpretation of weather and water almost suggests El Greco—only proves the rule. Through Jan. 21. . . . ¶ A show giving ample evidence of Velázquez's genius as a portraitist. Through Jan. 7. . . . ¶ The Costume Institute's exhibition represents changing French fashions from the ancien régime through the Napoleonic Wars. It consists of fashionable attire, including a ceremonial dress the Empress Josephine wore at court, and military uniforms. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Picasso and Braque: Pioneering Cubism"—The show is truly dazzling, and those who think that Cubism is dry and overly intellectual, or who feel that seeing this show is part of their cultural duty, will be happily surprised to find it juicy as well. Not that it isn't demanding: twenty galleries, on two levels, full of paintings, collages, construction sculptures, and drawings, wherein we follow the progress of the daring young men at their speediest, most intense, most symbiotically entwined. Through Jan. 16. (Open daily, except Wednesdays and Christmas, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—An exhibition of forty-five works by Jenny Holzer, who will represent the United States at the 1990 Venice Biennale. Included are engraved granite benches and an electronic message unit mounted on the museum's serpentine wall. Through Feb. 11. (Another of Holzer's installation works, "Laments," can be seen at Dia Art Foundation, 548 W. 22nd St.) (Open Tuesdays, 11 to 7:45, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 4:45.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—The premise of "Image World: Art and Media Culture"—"that the overpowering presence of the media has produced an 'image world' "—is about as sprightly as the Oldest Living Confederate Widow could expect to be. Nevertheless, many individual pieces, such as the new lobby "Ticket Booth," by Dennis Adams, which puts the Whitney's ticket-taking docents in a "homeless" frieze, are terrific. Through Feb. 18. . . . ¶ A retrospective of paintings by Thomas Hart Benton. Through Feb. 11. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—A show of seventy costumes from three Belle Époque Paris couture houses: Worth, Doucet, and Pingat. Through Feb. 26. . . . ¶ The twenty-fifth National Print Exhibition consists of eighty-two works by fifty artists and takes as its theme "projects and portfolios," which allows for some organizational creativity. Through Dec. 31. (Open daily, except Tuesdays and Christmas, 10 to 5.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"Crossroads of Continents," a travelling exhibition presented jointly by Soviet and North American museums, focusses on the cultures of Siberia and Alaska, and includes more than five hundred artifacts, such as kayaks, drums, clothing, and ivory carvings. (Open Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, except Christmas, 10 to 5:45; Wednesdays, 10 to 9; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—A show of Alexander Calder's homemade art: jewelry, toys, tools, and furnishings he whipped up for himself, his family, and his friends. Included are necklaces and brooches made with precious metals, and rude tin roasting pans and spatulas. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge from 5 to 9; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—Seventeen uncommonly good Old Master paintings on loan from Fort Worth's celebrated Kimbell Art Museum. Installed in the skylighted Garden Court, these works, by Fra Angelico, Domenichino, Georges de La Tour, Le Nain, Poussin, Caravaggio, Tiepolo, and Goya, among others, look amazingly young and vital. Through Jan. 14. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Sundays, except Dec. 24, from 1 to 6.)

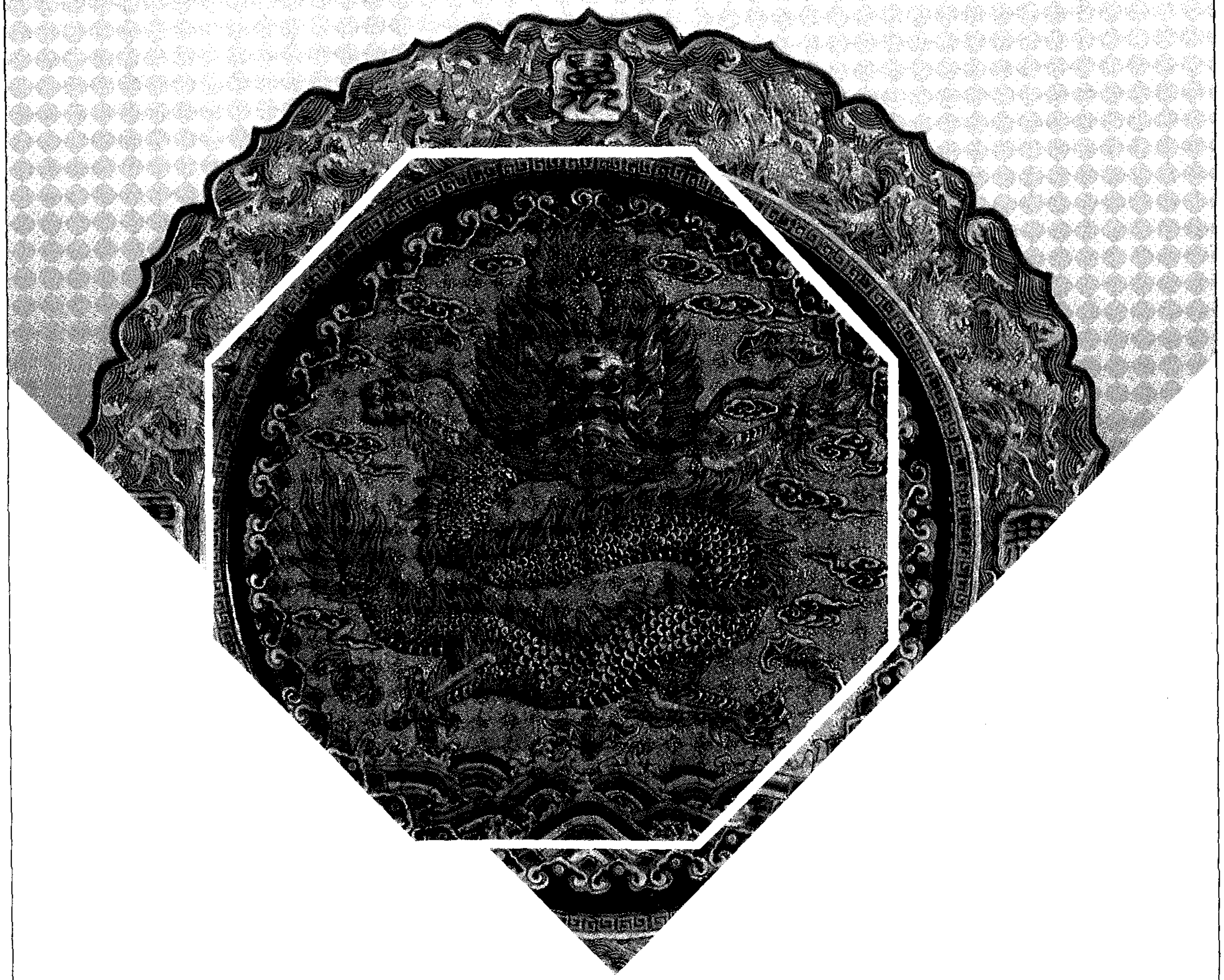
Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"A New Light on Hanukkah" brings together lamps and related objects created by seven contemporary artists, Alice Aycock and R. M. Fischer among them. (Open Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, noon to 5; Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Sundays 11 to 6.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"A Christmas Carol," written in December, 1843, still packs that velvety holiday punch. With Dickens' autograph manuscript on display in the library's Rotunda, bah-humbuggers can revisit that festive first sentence: "Marley was dead." Through Jan. 14. . . . ¶ A show of all things Gilbert and Sullivan, including handwritten librettos, original-cast photographs, recorded music, and all the surviving original scores for the dynamic duo's operas. Through Feb. 18. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, except Dec. 24, from 1 to 5.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—This travelling sampler, from the Fitzwilliam Museum, at Cambridge University, is an epicure's delight. One of the world's best-loved small museums, the Fitzwilliam covers a lot of bases, and objects ranging from Celtic and Roman coins to a sketch by the Futurist Umberto Boccioni are currently on view here. Ford Madox Brown's famous Pre-Raphaelite tondo "The Last of England" is included, along with a charming rococo genre scene painted by Marguerite Gérard and her brother-in-law Fragonard. There are a pair of lovely early watercolors by Turner, two dramatic and typical "Death" themes by Blake, a marvellously heroic sketch of two male figures by the usually ethereal Puvis de Chavannes, and a vivid, tiny watercolor by J. S. Cotman, titled "Postwick Grove, Norfolk." The scene-stealer might just be the almost inconceivably sweet porcelain "Hen and Chickens Tureen," manufactured at the Chelsea factory around 1755—but there's plenty of strong competition. Through Jan. 28. (Open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

The New Museum, 583 Broadway—A show of poignant large-scale photographs on canvas, with minimal painted interventions, by Annette Lemieux. They depict the "appearance" of sound—deaf children with their heads on a piano, a waterfall, the bomb, Edgar Bergen and his wooden other. Even the noise from a contiguous screening of Australian videos is somehow silenced by these humbly beautiful works about memory and loss. . . . ¶ A collaborative installation by Martha Fleming and Lyne Lapointe that was inspired by a poem by Christina Rossetti and is intended to be about women's pleasures. However, with its use of Adirondack rusticity—paintings of bugs, squirrels, and bats, a mosaic floor, log benches, a worn balustrade, cozy country floor lamps, and much bark—it looks like an elaborate reprocessing of stick art. Through Feb. 4. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 8.)

Illustration: Dish With Nine Dragons Decor by Kao Chih-ming (from the collection of the Howard Plaza Hotel)



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GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Glenn Goldberg—Small, intense painted panels, in enamel on wood. Goldberg's over-all compositions alternately suggest windows or editing-room screens, and his imagery—birdlike shapes that seem somehow to have been flattened or fossilized in his hard surfaces—looks trapped on the fly. While these works are bold, emblematic, and quite vivid, they are also glyphic and very private. Through Jan. 4. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St.)

John Lees—These ultra-thick, rutted paintings seem to have so much anxiety loaded into them that they are, paradoxically, soothing—blurred houses and courtyards that have momentarily materialized, like visions. Through Jan. 6. (Hirschl & Adler Modern, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. Closed Dec. 23-26.)

"Yoruba: Nine Centuries of African Art and Thought"—The Yoruba are an ethnic group of West African peoples who inhabited the southwestern area of what are now Nigeria and the Republic of Benin, beginning in roughly the eleventh century. Many objects in this exhibition—a gorgeous bronze head, for instance, from the sixteenth century, whose bulging eyes might make a few viewers think of Ed Paschke's faces—suggest an especially refined aesthetic and perhaps less of a preoccupation with sexuality and fetish than is generally noted among tribal societies. Through Jan. 7. (Center for African Art, 54 E. 68th St. Closed Dec. 23-24.)

Short List—**raphael soyer,** Forum, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St. (through Jan. 4); **cy twombly,** Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. (through Jan. 20).

GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

Eduardo Chillida—The first major New York show of work by this well-known Spanish sculptor. Most of the bent, puzzled shapes suggest variations on lock mechanisms, which makes a lot of sense historically if you think of the Catalonian tradition of ironwork, as exemplified by Julio González. Chillida's work is strongest when it's most self-contained—for instance, his tabletop pieces. One feels he works under very concentrated and somewhat solipsistic circumstances. Through Dec. 30. (Janis, 110 W. 57th St.)

Gino De Domenicis—The maverick De Domenicis, based in Rome, is obsessed with phenomenology—death, the ephemeral, the perceptual, the literal, the immortal. In the artist's first American show, we find a human skeleton on its back, with roller skates on its feet and a huge, pointy-tipped steel cylinder hovering above one finger. It is presided over by a bizarre relief figure—part Cyclops, part Pinocchio, part Tinker Bell—painted black, yellow, and purple. There are also some beautiful neoclassical drawings. Through Jan. 10. (Rayburn Foundation, 41 E. 57th St.)

Nicola De Maria—Titled "Testa di Fuoco, Spirito Bianco, Musica Interna" ("Head of Fire, White Spirit, Internal Music"), this installation relies on the artist's intense and pristine sense of color. De Maria's individual abstract paintings here are of a piece with his sumptuous treatment of the gallery walls. The colors themselves are inspired by Giotto by way of Raoul Dufy. The content of the work, for all its spiritual grandeur, which Giotto perhaps inspired as well, can easily be taken as sublimely decorative entertainment. Through Dec. 23. (Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St.)

Jan Fabre—Like Yves Klein, Fabre, too, has his blue. It's BIC-pen blue that permeates everything on view here. The exhibition consists of two big, vaultlike chambers that might be used as a form of tranquillity therapy, BIC-ink-blot drawings that suggest Rorschach-style insects, two busts of the artist's dandyish great-grandfather—a botanical illustrator—and four manically scribbled-upon photographs, whose underlying images are of salamanders and bats. Fabre, known also for his neo-symbolist choreography, has always been a bit silly. Through Dec. 30. (Tilton, 24 W. 57th St.)

Robert Greene—The best fashionable artist, in the tradition of such minor masters as Florine Stettheimer and Jean Cocteau, to come along in some time. Greene's peopled and poodled pastorals—his trademark—are rendered in slightly acid pastel tones and with a gifted lyric touch. Many of his larger paintings, full of umbrellas and beach cabañas and circus acts, evoke the Lido and "Death in Venice," yet are also a pastiche of any number of other equally elegant and probably debauched secret lusts. Through Dec. 30. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

Walt Kuhn (1877-1949)—A delightful exhibition of works by a likable and flashy painter whose strong period flavor has recently come back into vogue. Kuhn was never a particularly interesting artist, but he had a flair for hot, saturated color and an eye for clowns and Spanish-looking dancers—so who cares? Through Dec. 30. (Midtown, 11 E. 57th St.)

Dorothea Rockburne—The artist has an exquisite sense of light in these large, but not large-scale, bright-colored geometric paintings. They don't have the unusual mixture of contained, sheltering geometry and grand monumentality that marks her best works. Also, a group of modest, strong drawings on papyrus entitled "Memory of the Light in Egypt." Through Jan. 6. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

Group Show—The most intriguing work in this focussed selection, at the Kent Gallery, is a dark and perplexing painting by Troy Brauntuch, of the slaughter of a boar. Leaning against the wall opposite it are ten of the twenty-five very elegant etched granite panels by Matt Mullican that are part of his ever-compelling project "The City" and that were originally created as a floor. Also included are some handsome photographs by James Welling of details from the architect H. H. Richardson's works. Through Dec. 29. (Kent, 41 E. 57th St.)

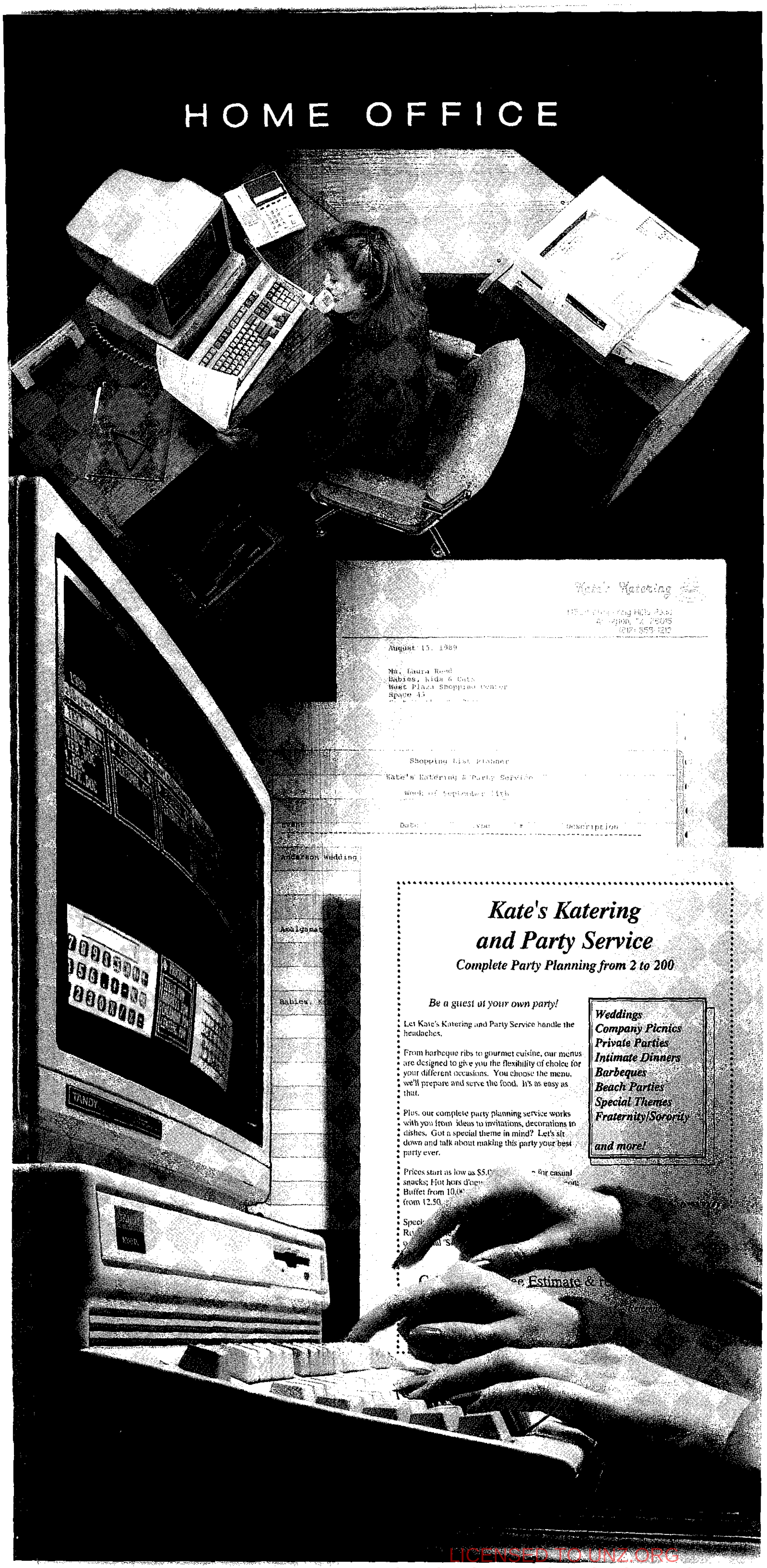
Short List—**claudio bravo,** Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through Dec. 30); **william crozier** and **edvard lieber,** McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. (through Jan. 27); **denny moers,** Lamagna, 50 W. 57th St. (through Jan. 6); **grandma moses,** Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St. (through Jan. 13); **dennis oppenheim** and **gordon matta-clark,** Holly Solomon, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through Dec. 30); **giuseppe penone,** Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through Dec. 30); **julian schnabel,** Pace, 32 E. 57th St. (through Jan. 6, closed Dec. 23); **turku trajan,** Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.

RECLAMATION

One of the last great maritime relics in the city is for sale. The Port Authority is trying to unload the Erie Basin, a nineteenth-century shipyard at the mouth of the Gowanus Canal, in Brooklyn. The lot includes a hundred and fifty-nine acres, a hundred of which lie underwater. A C-shaped pier lined with rusting metal warehouses separates the basin from the Gowanus Bay, and half-ruined industrial buildings occupy the rest of the land.

"We're looking for a buyer with some creative ideas," Timothy McGovern, a Port Authority planner, told us recently. We've thought up several such ways the property could be reused, none of them very likely to be enacted. For example, we envision the homeless living on houseboats in the basin, lulled to sleep at night by the waves lapping against the pier. The pier itself could become the setting for the city's longest and skinniest flea market. And then there's the old Grain Terminal, which towers over a nearby parking lot. This vast concrete hulk houses dozens of silos and seems to have come from a Hopper or Demuth painting. It needs only a fresh coat of paint to be transformed into an awe-inspiring drive-in-movie screen.

For more practical proposals, the deadline is January 16.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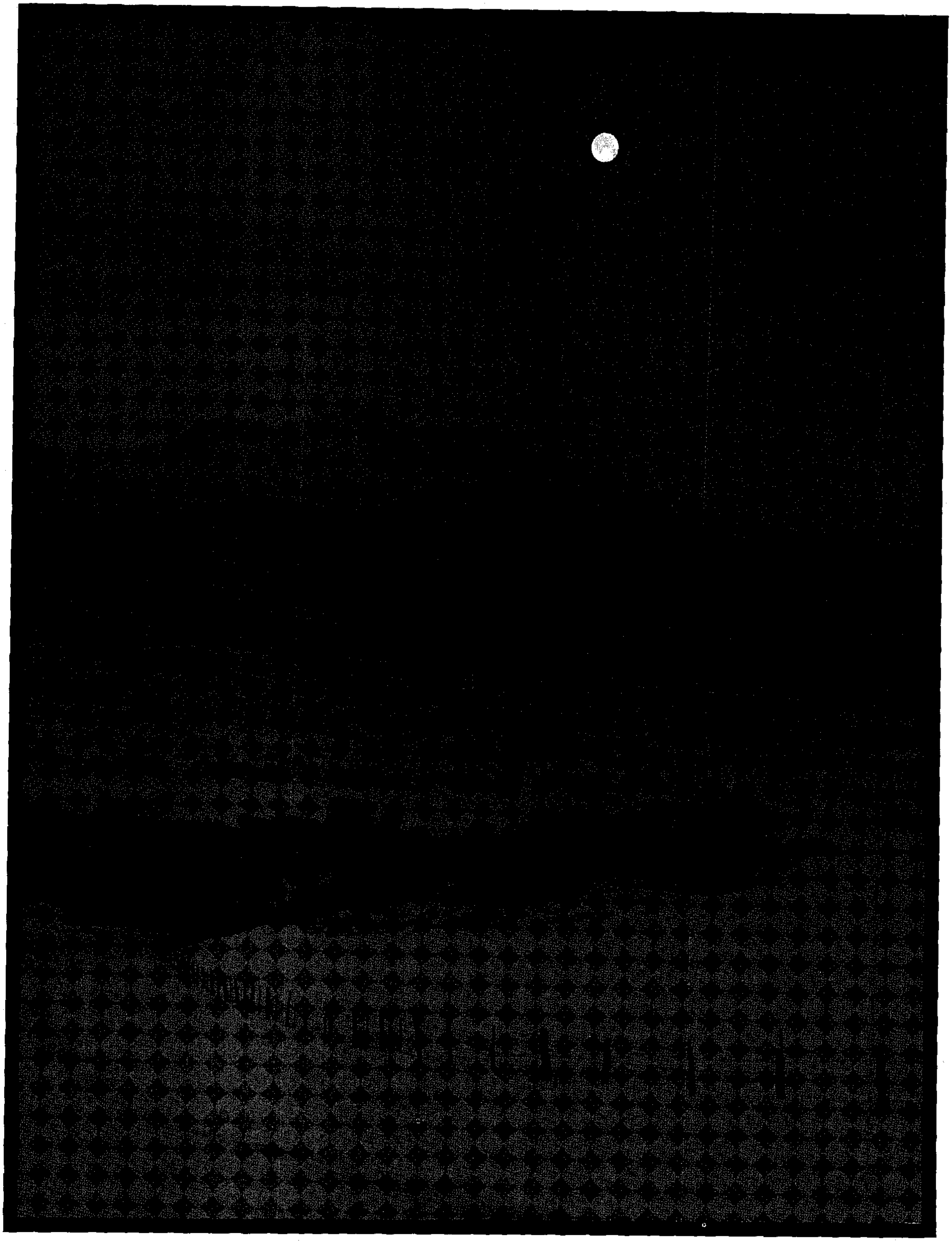

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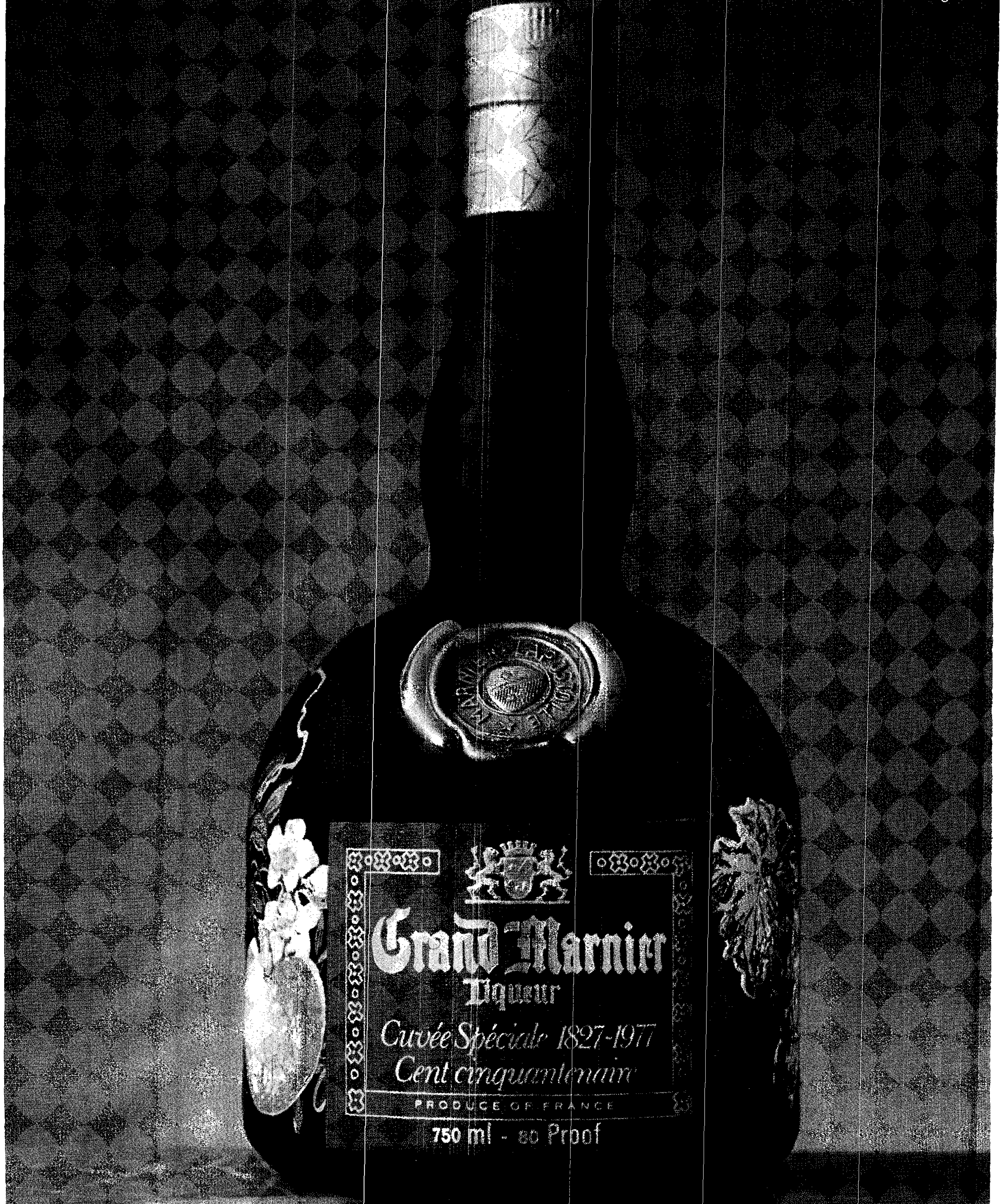
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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

(through Jan. 6); **NOT VITAL,** Baron-Boisanté, 50 W. 57th St. (through Jan. 27).

GALLERIES—SoHo

Terry Allen—This American original has always been admirably uncompromising: either you can get on his wavelength or you can't. If you can, you arrive at a scenic place—a gonzo, pop-philosophic, white-trash-populated overlook on culture. This show includes four paintings that are allegories of icon glut and political deceit, including, for instance, "Empire," an androgynous nude figure with its face stuck up its behind. Also on view is a very strong installation work consisting of a big, screened, chicken-coop-like house containing a six-foot-long block figure, lying down, some of whose body parts are actually speakers droning late-night-TV-style self-help messages. Through Dec. 23. (Weber, 142 Greene St.)

Mark Alsterlind and **Camille Revel**—Competent, color-sparked abstract paintings on canvas by Alsterlind, and mediocre post-minimalist wood constructions by Revel. Through Dec. 30. (June Kelly, 591 Broadway.)

David Carrino—Some of these canvases, with ink drawings of scrambled penmanship attached to them, are overaestheticized and annoyingly facile. But the artist can also create works of stirring beauty, with a touch of visual haiku. In one work, most of the paper has been moistened, so that the writing blurs into a stormy sea of inky Japanese smudges: all that can be read in the two dry Rothko registers in the center is "Yours in life and death through all transformations" and "Faithfully yours, David." Through Dec. 22. (Shafrazi, 163 Mercer St.)

Giuseppe Gallo—Drawings and watercolors by an Italian artist who seems to be an amalgam of the three "C"s. He uses mostly red, some black, and a little green to depict waves that look like hands, scissors, keys, little heads at the tips of smoke wisps, numbered peas, and lots of horses and rams. Drawing doesn't get more decadent, more self-possessed, or more beautiful than this. Also, some exquisite but less memorable bronzes of a tassel-edged pillow, a spoon, and a lemon in a chalice. Through Jan. 2. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. Closed Dec. 26-27.)

Isa Genzken—These broken-concrete-block structures on tall steel stands are fiercely confrontational—virtually authoritarian—and difficult to like. The artist takes on issues of gender identification by presenting traditionally female configurations through a typically male language, a path chosen by a number of other German women artists. Through Dec. 24. (Shainman, 560 Broadway.)

Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe—Good abstract paintings about line, edge, color, stroke, and light, with a bit too much dependence on the painter extraordinaire Robert Ryman. Through Dec. 23. (Plumb, 81 Greene St.)

Duncan Grant (1885-1978)—Watercolors and a couple of oils. The "secret" erotica that makes up this show is pleasant, athletic, and a bit silly—good fun. Male couples, trios, and quartets, in which black men are literally and figuratively highlighted, perform bumptiously balletic sex acts in a late-colonialist collegial mood. The artist's touch is fast and light, and even the mild S-M subjects are tastefully calligraphic. They bring to mind the joke "What did the sadist say to the masochist who asked to be beaten?" Answer: "No." Through Dec. 23. (303 Gallery, 127 Spring St.)

Roni Horn—This artist regards cadmium, cobalt, etc., primarily as physical elements and not simply as pigments, and when she builds up her powders on paper, in irregular quasi-geometric shapes, the results are most impressive. They are like distilled sculpture, or like severely poetic interpretations of the periodic table. Her plainer drawings are just too stinting. Through Dec. 23. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

Serge Kliaving—On first viewing, a season ago, this artist's puns on corporate and governmental logos seemed compact and visually clever, even if the political critiques they implied seemed suspiciously useful in their single-mindedness. This show of paintings on the same theme is just one long, predictable, unenlightening, and pseudo-paranoid one-liner, mostly on the C.I.A. Through Dec. 23. (Koury Wingate, 578 Broadway.)

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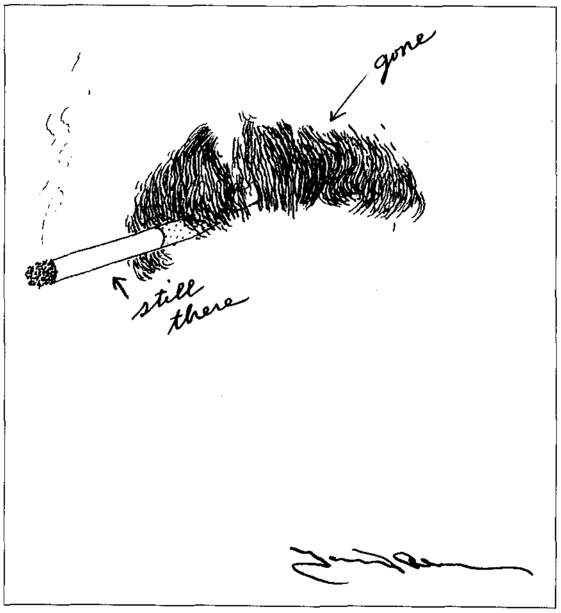

Self-portrait by Terry Allen

Margrit Lewczuk—Good, old-fashioned American abstraction of the Hartley-Dove kind. Through Dec. 23. (Auchincloss, 558 Broadway.)

Lisa Milroy—An English artist's first major New York show, consisting of paintings in which hyperrealist Pop subjects (automobile tires, for instance) are patterned across a surface, à la Larry Poons. This work has a following but seems depressingly comic and pointlessly unpleasant. Through Dec. 23. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

Catherine Murphy—A quirky range of deadpan realism, including two perplexing paintings of windows—about as good as contemporary realism gets. Through Dec. 22. (Lennon, Weinberg, 580 Broadway.)

Mary Obering—New geometric paintings, composed with various metallic materials. These succinct, New Age reprises of Stella are so above it all that they could give you a very high-minded headache. Through Dec. 30. (Nosei, 100 Prince St. Closed Dec. 26.)

Richard Prince—A double show. Unexpected new wall reliefs, made of fibreglass, wood, oil, and enamel, that are actually altered automobile hoods—the kind you might order through *Hot Rod.* They are in fifties, kindergarten colors. There is also a more characteristic Marlboro Man-type Ektacolor print. . . . ¶ Paintings that consist of deadpan verbal jokes and literary cartoons. Through Dec. 23. (Gladstone, 99 Greene St., and Gorney, 100 Greene St.)

Gerhard Richter—This show of works on paper, including a group of little oils painted on postcard-size photos, is really beautiful. Richter's vertiginous segues between heightened, landscape-related realism and "pure" abstraction should put all such false distinctions to rest. The colors alone, whether as tight as Venetian paper dyes or as loose as de Kooning, induce such oxymoronic states as controlled euphoria. Through Jan. 13. (Nolan, 560 Broadway. Closes after Dec. 22 for ten days.)

Antoni Tàpies—When looking at these eloquent objects and assemblages by the Spanish master, one can't help but think of the political climate in Fascist Spain, where they were made, in the late sixties and early seventies. One, for example, consists of a washbasin filled with a stack of newspapers topped by a bloody, red paint stroke, ready to be cleansed. The works all resonate with references to artmaking, and the paint stroke can be read as satisfying an ancient urge. Through Dec. 30. (Cervera, 470 Broome St.)

Colin Thomson—Attractive, somewhat zany surreal-abstract paintings. Through Jan. 13. (Lieberman & Saul, 155 Spring St. Opens at noon on Saturdays. Closed Dec. 26-30.)

Tom of Finland—An artist known for contemporary gay erotica of beefy leathermen, much of it explicit and comical for all its exaggeration, and much of it innocently aesthetic. More serious fuel for the pornography-erotica debate. Through Jan. 6. (Feature, 484 Broome St. Closed Dec. 26.)

Fluxus—A large, crowded, happily chaotic group show of recent works by many of the notoriously scattered members of this epochal, neo-Dada anti-movement, which is currently experiencing a resurgence. Highlights include a steel trash can with a built-in alarm system, by Yoshi Wada, and a vertical row of pastel terry-cloth hand towels, by Jeff Perkins, that are monogrammed with the names of several important longstanding Fluxites, including Yoko, Nam June, and Carolee. Through Jan. 13. (Harvey, 537 Broadway.)

Group Shows—At the **KIND,** 136 Greene St.: A great sampling of outsider art, including two watercolor-and-collage fantasies about gun-wielding prepubescent schoolgirls in their frilly little dresses by a hospital janitor named Henry Darger; and a drawing of bizarre animals composed of abundant sexual anatomy by a Lithuanian prison- and asylum-dweller, Friedrich Schröder-Sonnenstern, who was at various times a thief, a smuggler, and the leader of a mystical sect. Through Jan. 17. . . . **VIAFORA,** 568 Broadway: A thin exhibition about "the discomfort of recent history." The possible exceptions are Christian Marclay's "Galatea and Pygmalion," a depiction of appropriation, manipulation, and cultural regeneration in the form of two huge marionettes fashioned out of record albums and jackets for "My Fair Lady," and Nayland Blake's worn paperbacks encased in Plexiglas boxes. Through Dec. 23.

Short List—**J. S. G. BOGGS** and **MIGUEL ANGEL RIOS,** Baghoomian, 555 Broadway (through Dec. 30); **BERNARD CHAET,** Pearl, 420 West Broadway (through Dec. 22); **DALE CHIHULY,** Cowles, 420 West Broadway (through Dec. 23); **JOSEPH DI GIORGIO,** Walls, 137 Greene St. (through Dec. 30); **DAVID MACH,** Toll, 146 Greene St. (through Jan. 13, except Dec. 23-27).

OTHER GALLERIES

AIDS and Art—The primal need to leave one's mark shines through in an unnecessarily controversial exhibition at Artists Space, 223 West Broadway. "Witnesses: Against Our Vanishing" is an eloquent memorial to those who are ill or have died, and includes particularly poignant works by Vittorio Scarpati, Kiki Smith, David Wojnarowicz, Tom Chesley, Mark Morrisroe, and Shellburne Thurber. The show and its catalogue compose a portrait of a community of artists who care for each other, mourn their losses, express anger, and seek to convey the reality of the illness to a sometimes indifferent, sometimes ignorant public. Through Jan. 6. . . . ¶ A stirring retrospective of small box constructions by Rod Rhodes (1944-89) at The Clocktower Gallery, 108 Leonard St., includes the fourteen "Stations of the Cross" that the artist—the son of a fundamentalist preacher—made after he was diagnosed as having AIDS. The miniature tableaux in the cross-shaped boxes are beautiful, pure, and personal. The artist died shortly before the exhibition opened. Also here are the peculiar "Technological Reliquary" sculptures made in the mid-sixties by Paul Thek (1933-88). Each work is a Plexiglas column sliced open to reveal a short section of bloody arteries. Some columns have coffins behind them. Through Dec. 24. (Opens at noon Thursdays through Sundays.)

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PHOTOGRAPHY

THE cliché "Good things come in small packages" applies nicely to a photography show that's on right now, at the Robert Miller Gallery, of the work of a committed maker but also breaker of clichés—Andy Warhol. The exhibition is made up of four-shot strips taken in photo booths in the mid-sixties. It is a show that, like Warhol's art itself, is deceptively casual-looking. It's do-it-yourself, cheap photography, but it's also Warholian in a key way. Some of these photographs ended up blown up as Warhol portraits and others just sat around until now. Altogether, they're an intimate portrait of an era—and they're fun, the way sitting in those photo booths was. Some look like mug shots, others like high-school-yearbook pictures, and some are real down-home glamour sequences—such as those of the art dealer Holly Solomon. After all the Warhol fuss, and the binge of Warhol press, these images are welcome for how they take us closer to this artist's roots, to his process, and to his strategy of simplicity. But they don't cost twenty-five cents anymore.

Berenice Abbott—Although the photographs on display span five decades, for the most part they're not nostalgic in feeling: Abbott's eye is too tough and unsentimental. The largest section of the exhibition covers Abbott's New York pictures. A couple of these views—of the understructures of the R.K.O. Building and the former RCA Building—make one realize how rare it is to come across pictures that focus on the bottom end of a skyscraper. In these asbestos-blowup days, that's where the action is. Through Jan. 6. (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. Open daily, except Sundays and Christmas, 10 to 6.)

Josef Astor—Small photographs, including portraits and fragments of industrial landscapes, baked into French porcelain plaques that suggest the plaques found on many European tombstones. Sombre, elegant, clever—and there's a deadpan humor at work here. Through Dec. 30. (Cugliani, 508 Greenwich St., at Spring St.)

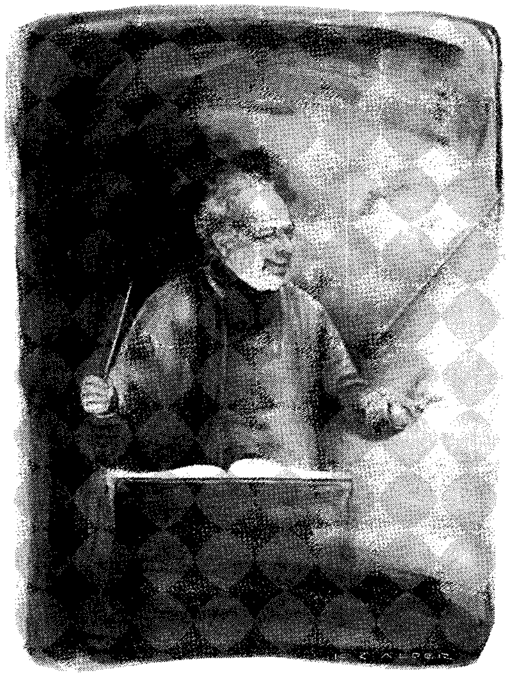
Laurie Simmons—This artist doesn't hit you on the head about the nature of our consumer culture. Instead, she drapes a giant alligator purse, say, or a huge camera over a model or a mannequin, so that most of the figure disappears underneath the object; only the legs stick out. These photographs have a wonderful mixture of fantasy, reality, exaggeration, and understatement. Through Dec. 23. (Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St.)

Philippe Thomas—This French conceptualist illustrates the collusion among artists, dealers, and collectors in an intelligent and funny way. His photographs, commissioned through a fictional agency called Readymades Belong to Everyone (he established it as part of an exhibition at the now defunct Cable Gallery), are attributed to the patrons who commissioned them. The photographs "by" the advertising mogul Jay Chiat, in keeping with the collector-artist's trade, look as if they had been lifted from an annual report, while the ones "by" the curator-collector Edouard Merino are more abstract and arty. The catalogue includes text "by" Laura Carpenter. Through Dec. 23. (Marcus, 578 Broadway.)

New Photography at MOMA—Three eccentric photographers who work in color. Thomas Florschuetz shows hyperreal blowups of details of his hands, his face, and a nail; one of Vincent Borrelli's subjects is the interior of a 1956 Ford whose décor is part disco and part Bible; and Mike Mandel, the most original of the three, fits his subjects with tiny colored bicycle lights that function as strobes—the resulting trails of light enliven such mundane actions as "Emptying the Fridge" and "Having a Talk." Through Jan. 9.

Magnum Photographers—About two hundred prints by the founders of the Magnum coöperative—Robert Capa, Henri Cartier-Bresson, David Seymour (Chim), and George Rodger. Through Jan. 7. (International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.) . . . ¶ "In Our Time," another Magnum-based show, includes more than three hundred works by sixty past and present members. Through Feb. 4. (International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. Daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8.)

Short List—**bernd and hilla becher,** Dia Art Foundation, 548 W. 22nd St. (opens at noon Thursdays through Sundays, except Dec. 24, through June 17); **william eggleston,** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. (through Jan. 27); **daniel faust,** American Fine Arts, 40 Wooster St. (through Jan. 6); **sylvia plachy,** Twining, 568 Broadway (through Jan. 27); **herb ritts,** Staley-Wise, 555 Broadway (opens at noon, through Jan. 27); **paul rosin,** Thorp, 103 Prince St. (through Jan. 27, except Dec. 26-30); **andres serrano,** Stux, 155 Spring St. (through Jan. 6); **andy warhol,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. (through Dec. 30).



Alexander Schneider with the New York String Orchestra

MUSIC

WE know someone who more or less grew up on P. D. Q. Bach, and this is what he says today about Professor Peter Schickele:

I don't remember exactly how I first came across those early Vanguard albums, but I'm quite sure I knew several of them from memory at a time when a whole Beethoven symphony would have overtaxed my attention span. The idea of "Iphigenia in Brooklyn" seemed hilarious in itself; the idea of actually listening to one of those long, slow Iphigenia operas by Gluck would never have got farther than about Side 1, Band 3. If I had listened, I might have suspected that P. D. Q. hadn't; "Iphigenia in

Brooklyn" is spoof Handel, not spoof Gluck. Spoof Gluck would be pretty hard to do. But with Handel's coloratura arias and their repeated words you could end a recitative with "O gods! What is it like to be running? Only he who is running knows!" and then launch a florid aria on the text "Running knows."

This sort of thing seemed to me the height of sophisticated satire. An off-coloratura soprano? An "Echo Sonata for Two Unfriendly Groups of Instruments"? An opera in one unnatural act? (I think it was called "Bob and Carol and Ted and Alice"; I was too young to be taken to the movie alluded to.) What could be funnier?

By the time I could take in a whole act of Wagner without too much squirming, I definitely felt P. D. Q. Bach was something to be outgrown. No doubt Mr. Schickele has felt the same at times, and by the time our paths crossed again he had started to run low on funny titles. But I surprised myself by laughing right from the heart at old jokes and new, and every time his annual Christmastime Carnegie engagement comes around (this year, December 26, 28, and 30) I think about going to hear him.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Alice Tully Hall 362-1911; for Avery Fisher Hall 874-2424; and for Carnegie Hall 247-7800. Other box-office numbers are included in the listings.)

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA—**DER FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER,** a new production, with Mechthild Gessendorf, Gary Lakes, James Morris, and Paul Plishka; conducted by James Levine. (Dec. 18, Dec. 22, and Dec. 27, all at 8.) . . . **LES CONTES D'HOFFMANN,** with Erie Mills, Catherine Malfitano, Judith Forst, Luis Lima, and José van Dam; Sylvain Cambreling. (Dec. 19 at 8 and Dec. 23 at 1:30.) . . . **AIDA,** with Alessandra Marc, Dolora Zajick, Ermanno Mauro, and Andrew Smith; Christian Badea. (Dec. 20 at 8.) . . . With Leona Mitchell, Dolora Zajick, Ermanno Mauro, and Sherrill Milnes; Christian Badea. (Dec. 23 at 8.) . . . **WOZZECK,** with Hildegard Behrens, Gottfried Hornik, James King, and Graham Clark; James Levine. (Dec. 21 and Dec. 26 at 8.) . . . **DIE FLEDERMAUS,** with Carol Vaness, Barbara Kilduff, Brigitte Fassbaender, and Neil Shicoff; Hermann Michael. (Dec. 25 at 8.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—At Avery Fisher Hall, Zubin Mehta conducting. Dec. 19 at 8: Works by Beethoven and Gerry Mulligan. With the Gerry Mulligan Quartet. . . . ¶ Dec. 21-23 at 8: A Schumann-Beethoven program, with Joseph Robinson, oboe; Marvis Martin, soprano; Ruby Hinds, mezzo-soprano; William Johns, tenor; Alastair Miles, bass; the New York Choral Artists; and the Pro Arte Chorale.

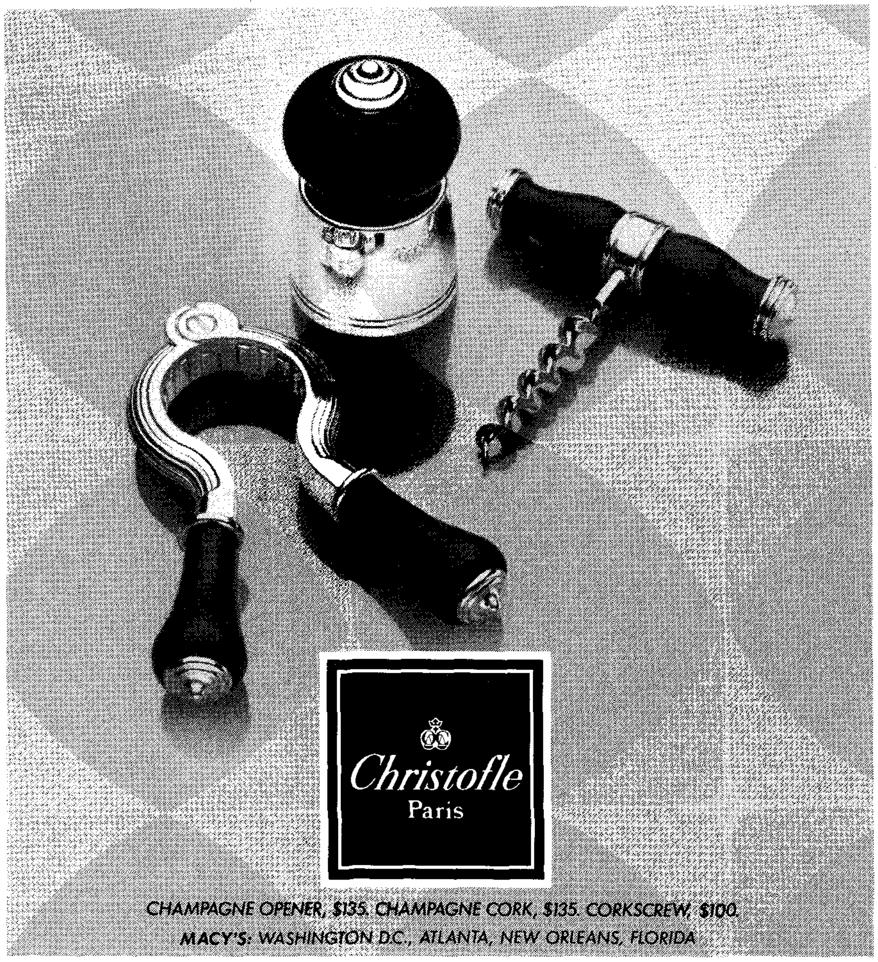
GRANDE BANDE—Frederick Renz conducting a program entitled "Bach Christmas." (Alice Tully Hall. Dec. 23 at 8.)

NEW YORK CHAMBER SYMPHONY—Nicholas McGegan conducting the first two concerts of a four-concert series devoted to the Brandenburg Concertos. With John Gibbons, harpsichord; Syoko Aki, violin; André Emelianoff, cello; and others. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Dec. 23 and Dec. 27 at 8.)

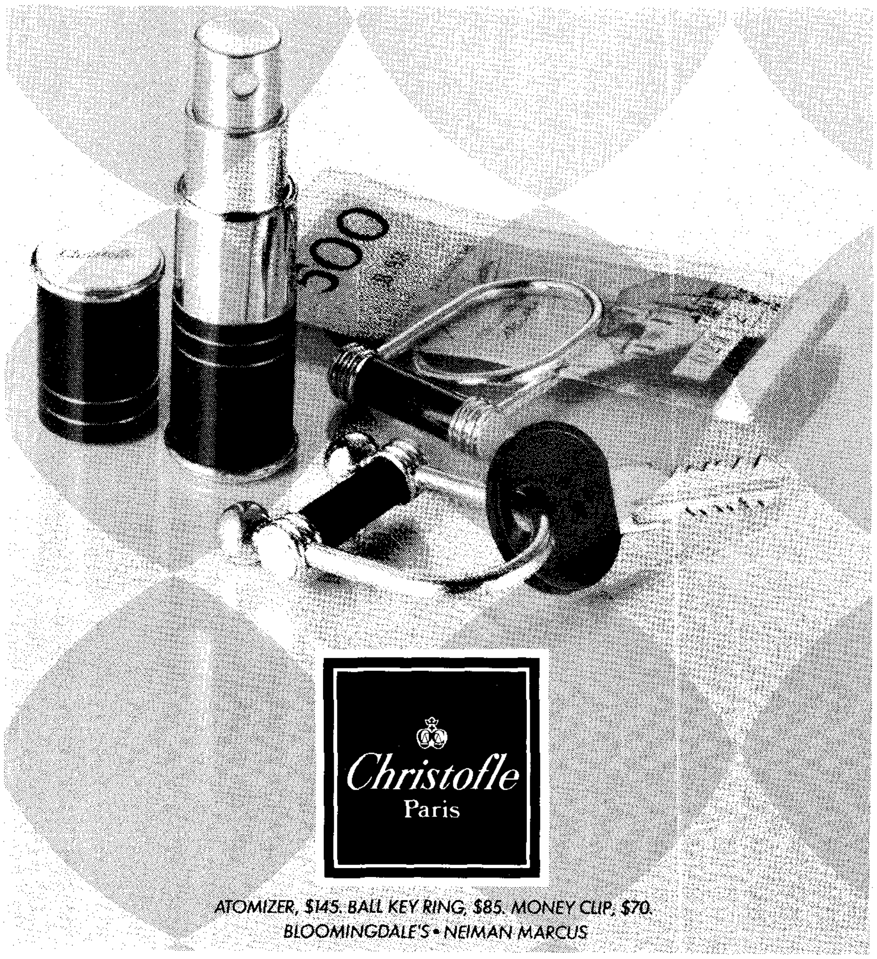
AMERICAN STRING ORCHESTRA—Alexander Schneider conducting a Bach-Haydn program. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 24 at midnight.)

"CHRISTMAS RAPPINGS"—Dennis Hearn directing a performance of Al Carmines' oratorio. (Trinity Presbyterian Church, 422 W. 57th St. Dec. 18-21 at 8. For information about tickets, call 564-2168.)

NEW CALLIOPE SINGERS—Peter Schubert directing works by Mozart, Morris Wright, and others. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th



CHAMPAGNE OPENER, $135. CHAMPAGNE CORK, $135. CORKSCREW, $100.
MACY'S: WASHINGTON D.C., ATLANTA, NEW ORLEANS, FLORIDA



ATOMIZER, $145. BALL KEY RING, $85. MONEY CLIP, $70.
BLOOMINGDALE'S • NEIMAN MARCUS

St. Dec. 19 at 8. Tickets at the door on the evening of the concert.)

Riverside Choir—John Walker directing. With the Aulos Ensemble. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Dec. 19 and Dec. 21 at 6:30 and 8:30.)

New York City Gay Men's Chorus—Gary Miller directing. With Faith Esham, soprano. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 20-21 at 8.)

Pomerium Musices and Calliope: A Renaissance Band—Performing a Christmas program, including works by Josquin Desprez, Cipriano de Rore, and Orlando di Lasso. (Christ Church United Methodist, Park Ave. at 60th St. Dec. 22 at 6 and 8. For information about tickets, call 838-3036.)

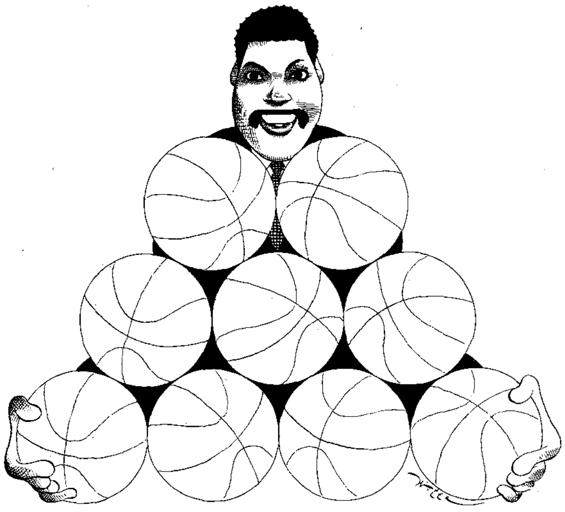
Handel's "Messiah"—Oratorio Society of New York: Lyndon Woodside directing. With Marilyn Altman, soprano; Julia Davidson, mezzo-soprano; Carl Halvorson, tenor; and James Courtney, baritone. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 19 at 8.) . . . **Canterbury Choral Society:** Charles Dodsley Walker directing a hundred-voice chorus and a full orchestra, as well as the audience. (Church of the Heavenly Rest, Fifth Ave. at 90th St. 289-3400. Dec. 20 at 8.) . . . **Cathedral Combined Choirs:** Paul Halley directing the chorus, an orchestra, and vocal soloists. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. 662-2133. Dec. 21 at 7:30.) . . . **Sing-in at Avery Fisher Hall:** *Directed (seriatim, fortunately) by twenty-*one choral conductors. (Dec. 27 at 7:30.)

RECITALS

S.E.M. Ensemble—Playing works by John Cage, Rhys Chatham, Vivaldi, and others. (Paula Cooper Gallery, 155 Wooster St. Dec. 19 at 8. Tickets at the door on the evening of the performance.)

Golden Fleece, Ltd.—Presenting vocal works by American women composers. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. Dec. 19 at 8. Tickets at the door on the evening of the concert.)

Peter Schickele—With his alter ego, P. D. Q. Bach. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 26, Dec. 28, and Dec. 30 at 8.)



Stu Jackson

New York Cornet & Sacbut Ensemble—With Peter Becker, baritone; Carol Wilson, soprano; Adam Gilbert, recorder and curtal; and Gwendolyn Toth, harpsichord and organ. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Dec. 27 at 8.)

JAZZ / POP / ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Terence Trent D'Arby—His début album, "Introducing the Hardline According to Terence Trent D'Arby," was a massively promoted, well-received shot at the Prince market. It contained songs ("Wishing Well," for example) that tried to redefine the boundaries between rock and soul. He continues in this vein on his new album, "Neither Fish nor Flesh," but it's more than just a followup; it's a great leap forward. The songs are long on melody and short on drum machines, and don't play the same production games as many of today's hits; they're slinkier, leaner—and take some time to kick in. Onstage, the reigning king of arrogance seems to embody the history of rock and soul, from Marvin Gaye to Mick Jagger, with no apologies, and gives it all he's got. (The World, 254 E. 2nd St. 947-5850. Dec. 20 at 9:30.)

Jessica Hagedorn, Laurie Carlos, and Robbie McCauley—With Nicky Paraiso. (Alternative Museum, 17 White St. 966-4444. Dec. 20 at 8.)

Little Anthony—Criterion Cabaret, Broadway at 45th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 8, and Thursdays through Saturdays at 8 and 10. Through Dec. 30.

Little Feat—With Bonnie Raitt and the Neville Brothers, in a benefit concert. (Madison Square Garden. 563-8300. Dec. 21 at 7:30.)

Billy Joel—Nassau Coliseum. 1-516 422-9222. Dec. 21-22 and Dec. 27 at 8. Through Dec. 31.

Bobby Brown—With Sheena Easton, in a benefit concert for the United Negro College Fund. (Madison Square Garden. Dec. 22 at 8.)

Stephanie Mills—With Christopher Williams. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 719-4099. Dec. 26-27 at 8. Through Dec. 31.)

Richard Lewis—Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Dec. 27 at 8.

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Jets—Vs. the Buffalo Bills, Dec. 23 at 12:30.

Giants—Vs. the Los Angeles Raiders, Dec. 24 at 1.

Rangers—Vs. the Buffalo Sabres, Dec. 20. . . . ¶ Vs. the Devils, Dec. 26. (Game time, 7:30.)

Islanders—Vs. the Devils, Dec. 19 at 7:35. . . . ¶ Vs. the Pittsburgh Penguins, Dec. 23 at 2:05.

Devils—Vs. the Winnipeg Jets, Dec. 22 at 7:45. . . . Vs. the Chicago Black Hawks, Dec. 24 at 1:35.

Knicks—Vs. the Utah Jazz, Dec. 19. . . . ¶ Vs. the Nets, Dec. 23. (Game time, 7:30.)

Nets—Vs. the Dallas Mavericks, Dec. 20. . . . ¶ Vs. the Detroit Pistons, Dec. 22. . . . ¶ Vs. the Washington Bullets, Dec. 26. . . . ¶ Vs. the Knicks, Dec. 28. (Game time, 7:30.)

(The Giants, the Jets, the Devils, and the Nets play at the Meadowlands, 1-201 935-3900; the Rangers and the Knicks play at Madison Square Garden, 563-8300; and the Islanders play at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 422-9222.)

RACING

Horses—At Aqueduct: Daily, except Tuesdays, Christmas, and New Year's Day, at 12:30. . . . Meadowlands: Dec. 18-23 at 7:30. . . . **Trotting** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights, except Christmas and New Year's Day, at 8 and Tuesdays at 1.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Not Your Average Pine—On loan from Primitive Trees, a shop in Cedarburg, Wisconsin, and on display at the Museum of American Folk Art are Christmas trees made of feathers from chickens, geese, and turkeys. German and Swiss immigrants imported their feather-tree tradition to the Midwestern states when they moved there, in the nineteenth century. (Columbus Ave. between 65th and 66th Sts. Open daily, 9 to 9.) . . . ¶ A twelve-foot Colorado blue spruce, which grew up on a farm in New Jersey, is on display at the Gotham Book Mart. It is covered with rare and antique ornaments. (41 W. 47th St. Open daily, except Sundays, from 10 to 6.)

"The People's Palace"—A new permanent exhibition about the beginnings of the New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St., which opened on May 23, 1911. It includes reproductions of drawings by Carrère and Hastings, the architects who won the commission to design the building, and a photograph of the Croton Reservoir, which occupied the site until 1899. (Mondays, except Christmas, through Wednesdays from 10 to 9, and Thursdays through Saturdays from 10 to 6.)

Beverly Sills—Talking about her two careers—as diva and as arts administrator. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Dec. 19 at 8.)

Memoranda—Winter starts at 4:22 P.M. on Dec. 21; Chanukkah starts at sundown on Dec. 22; Christmas is, as always, on Dec. 25.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 27.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)

Theatre 1: "Sidewalk Stories" (†).

Theatre 2: Through Dec. 19: "Tom Jones" (1963, directed by Tony Richardson), with Albert Finney. From Dec. 20: "The Little Thief" (†).

Theatre 3: "The Fabulous Baker Boys" (†).

Theatre 4: "sex, lies, and videotape" (†).

Theatre 5: "Mapantsula" (Oliver Schmitz; a South African film).

Theatre 6: "Drugstore Cowboy" (†).

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)

Dec. 19-21: (Separate admissions) "Romero" (John Duigan), with Raul Julia; "Dance of Hope" (Deborah Shaffer); "Three Sad Tigers" (1968, Raul Ruiz; in Spanish); and "City of Pirates" (1983, Ruiz; in French).

From Dec. 22: "The Gang of Four" (1988, Jacques Rivette; in French), with Bulle Ogier and Benoit Regent.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)

Theatre 1: "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation" (Jeremiah S. Chechik), with Chevy Chase, Beverly D'Angelo, and Randy Quaid.

Theatre 2: "Family Business" (Sidney Lumet), with Sean Connery, Dustin Hoffman, and Matthew Broderick.

Theatre 3: "Steel Magnolias" (Herbert Ross), with Sally Field, Dolly Parton, Julia Roberts, Shirley MacLaine, Daryl Hannah, and Olympia Dukakis.

Bijou Cinema, 3rd Ave. between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)

"The War of the Roses" (Danny DeVito), with Michael Douglas, Kathleen Turner, and DeVito.

Loews 19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)

Theatre 1: "Harlem Nights" (Eddie Murphy), with Murphy, Richard Pryor, and Redd Foxx.

Theatre 2: "All Dogs Go to Heaven" (Don Bluth), an animated film.

Theatre 3: "True Love" (Nancy Savoca), with Annabella Sciorra and Ron Eldard.

Theatre 4: "Valmont" (†).

Theatre 5: "We're No Angels" (Neil Jordan), with Robert De Niro, Sean Penn, and Demi Moore.

Theatre 6: "She-Devil" (Susan Seidelman), with Meryl Streep, Roseanne Barr, and Ed Begley, Jr.

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)

"Blaze" (†).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)

"Back to the Future Part II" (†).

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)

Theatre 1: "Harlem Nights" (Eddie Murphy), with Murphy, Richard Pryor, and Redd Foxx.

Theatre 2: "We're No Angels" (Neil Jordan), with Robert De Niro, Sean Penn, and Demi Moore.

Theatre 3: "She-Devil" (Susan Seidelman), with Meryl Streep, Roseanne Barr, and Ed Begley, Jr.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)

"The War of the Roses" (Danny DeVito), with Michael Douglas, Kathleen Turner, and DeVito.

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)

"Look Who's Talking" (Amy Heckerling), with John Travolta and Kirstie Alley.

Sutton, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)

Through Dec. 21: "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation" (Jeremiah S. Chechik), with Chevy Chase, Beverly D'Angelo, and Randy Quaid.

From Dec. 22: "Tango and Cash" (Andrei Konchalovsky), with Sylvester Stallone and Kurt Russell.

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)

"Enemies, A Love Story" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)

Through Dec. 24: "Bloodhounds of Broadway" (Howard Brookner).

From Dec. 25: "Music Box" (Costa-Gavras), with Jessica Lange, Armin Mueller-Stahl, Frederic Forrest, and Lukas Haas.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)

Theatre 1: "Back to the Future Part II" (†).

Theatre 2: "The Wizard" (Todd Holland), with Fred Savage, Beau Bridges, and Christian Slater.

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)

"Family Business" (Sidney Lumet), with Sean Connery, Dustin Hoffman, and Matthew Broderick.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)

Theatre 1: "Back to the Future Part II" (†).

Theatre 2: "The War of the Roses" (Danny DeVito), with Michael Douglas, Kathleen Turner, and DeVito.

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)

Theatre 1: "Blaze" (†).

Theatre 2: Through Dec. 19: "The Little Mermaid" (†). From Dec. 20: "Roger & Me" (Michael Moore), a documentary.

Theatre 3: "True Love" (Nancy Savoca), with Annabella Sciorra and Ron Eldard.

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)

Theatre 1: "Steel Magnolias" (Herbert Ross), with Sally Field, Dolly Parton, Julia Roberts, Shirley MacLaine, Daryl Hannah, and Olympia Dukakis.

Theatre 2: "Glory" (Edward Zwick), with Matthew Broderick, Denzel Washington, Morgan Freeman, and Cary Elwes.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)

Through Dec. 21: "Triumph of the Spirit" (Robert M. Young), with Willem Dafoe, Edward James Olmos, and Robert Loggia.

From Dec. 22: "Always" (Steven Spielberg), with Richard Dreyfuss, Holly Hunter, John Goodman, and Brad Johnson.

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)

Theatre 1: "We're No Angels" (Neil Jordan), with Robert De Niro, Sean Penn, and Demi Moore.

Theatre 2: "She-Devil" (Susan Seidelman), with Meryl Streep, Roseanne Barr, and Ed Begley, Jr.

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)

"Driving Miss Daisy" (†).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)

"Crimes and Misdemeanors" (†).

U.A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)

"We're No Angels" (Neil Jordan), with Robert De Niro, Sean Penn, and Demi Moore.

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)

Theatre 1: "Back to the Future Part II" (†).

Theatre 2: "The War of the Roses" (Danny DeVito), with Michael Douglas, Kathleen Turner, and De Vito.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)

Theatre 1: Through Dec. 21: "Dad" (†). From Dec. 22: "Tango and Cash" (Andrei Konchalovsky), with Sylvester Stallone and Kurt Russell.

Theatre 2: "The Little Mermaid" (†).

WEST SIDE

Bleecker Street Cinema 1 and 2, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)

Theatre 1: (Separate admissions) "Les Liaisons Dangereuses" (1959, directed by Roger Vadim; in French), with Jeanne Moreau and Gérard Philipe; and "Queen of Hearts" (Jon Amiel).

Theatre 2: (Separate admissions) "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown" (Pedro Almodóvar; in Spanish), with Carmen Maura, Fernando Guillén, and Julieta Serrano; and "Matador" (1986, Almodóvar; in Spanish), with Antonio Banderas, Assumpta Serna, and Nacho Martínez.

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)

Theatre 1: "The War of the Roses" (Danny DeVito), with Michael Douglas, Kathleen Turner, and DeVito.

Theatre 2: "The Wizard" (Todd Holland), with Fred Savage, Beau Bridges, and Christian Slater.

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)

Through Dec. 19: "Crimes and Misdemeanors" (†).

From Dec. 20: "Driving Miss Daisy" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)

Theatre 1: "Back to the Future Part II" (†).

Theatre 2: Through Dec. 21: "Back to the Future Part II" (†). From Dec. 22: "Always" (Steven Spielberg), with Richard Dreyfuss, Holly Hunter, John Goodman, and Brad Johnson.

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)

Theatre 1: "The Little Mermaid" (†).

Theatre 2: Through Dec. 19: "Fear, Anxiety, and Depression." From Dec. 20: "Crimes and Misdemeanors" (†).

Theatre 3: Through Dec. 21: "Apartment Zero" (Martin Donovan), with Colin Firth and Hart Bochner. From Dec. 22: "Henry V" (†).

Theatre 4: "Blaze" (†).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)

Theatre 1: "Back to the Future Part II" (†).

Theatre 2: "Steel Magnolias" (Herbert Ross), with Sally Field, Dolly Parton, Julia Roberts, Shirley MacLaine, Daryl Hannah, and Olympia Dukakis.

Theatre 3: "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation" (Jeremiah S. Chechik), with Chevy Chase, Beverly D'Angelo, and Randy Quaid.

Theatre 4: "The War of the Roses" (Danny DeVito), with Michael Douglas, Kathleen Turner, and DeVito.

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Theatre 6: Through Dec. 21: "Steel Magnolias." From Dec. 22: "Tango and Cash" (Andrei Konchalovsky), with Sylvester Stallone and Kurt Russell.

Theatre 7: Through Dec. 19: "The War of the Roses." From Dec. 20: "Driving Miss Daisy" (†).

Theatre 8: Through Dec. 21: "The War of the Roses." From Dec. 22: "Always" (Steven Spielberg), with Richard Dreyfuss, Holly Hunter, John Goodman, and Brad Johnson.

Theatre 9: "Family Business" (Sidney Lumet), with Sean Connery, Dustin Hoffman, and Matthew Broderick.

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)

Theatre 1: "Look Who's Talking" (Amy Heckerling), with John Travolta, Kirstie Alley, Olympia Dukakis, George Segal, and Abe Vigoda.

Theatre 2: "The Little Mermaid" (†).

Theatre 3: "The Wizard" (Todd Holland), with Fred Savage, Beau Bridges, and Christian Slater.

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)

Theatre 1: "Dad" (†).

Theatre 2: "Back to the Future Part II" (†).

Theatre 3: "The Fabulous Baker Boys" (†).

Theatre 4: Through Dec. 21: "Back to the Future Part II" (†). From Dec. 22: "Always" (Steven Spielberg), with Richard Dreyfuss, Holly Hunter, John Goodman, and Brad Johnson.

Theatre 5: (Matinées only) "All Dogs Go to Heaven" (Don Bluth), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Sea of Love" (†).

Theatre 6: "The Wizard" (Todd Holland), with Fred Savage.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)

"The Little Mermaid" (†).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)

Through Dec. 19: "The Bear" (†).

From Dec. 20: "Born on the 4th of July" (Oliver Stone), with Tom Cruise and Willem Dafoe.

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)

Through Dec. 21: "Valmont" (†).

From Dec. 22: "Henry V" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)

Through Dec. 19: Theatre closed.

From Dec. 20: "Driving Miss Daisy" (†).

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)

Through Dec. 21: "Drugstore Cowboy" (†).

From Dec. 22: "Triumph of the Spirit" (Robert M. Young), with Willem Dafoe, Edward James Olmos, and Robert Loggia.

Carnegie Screening Room, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)

"Crimes and Misdemeanors" (†).

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)

Through Dec. 21: "Henry V" (†).

MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

From Dec. 22: "Camille Claudel" (Bruno Nuytten; in French), with Isabelle Adjani and Gérard Depardieu.

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)

(Matinées only) "All Dogs Go to Heaven" (Don Bluth), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Dad" (†).

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)

"Steel Magnolias" (Herbert Ross), with Sally Field, Dolly Parton, Julia Roberts, Shirley MacLaine, Daryl Hannah, Olympia Dukakis, Tom Skerritt, Sam Shepard, and Dylan McDermott.

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)

"The War of the Roses" (Danny DeVito), with Michael Douglas, Kathleen Turner, and DeVito.

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)

Theatre 1: "My Left Foot" (†).

Theatre 2: Through Dec. 19: "The Little *Thief" (†). From Dec. 20:* "Sand and Blood" (Jeanne Labrune; in French), with Sami Frey.

Theatre 3: "Story of Women" (†).

Cinema Studio 1 and 2, B'way at 66th. (877-4040)

Theatre 1: "Mystery Train" (Jim Jarmusch).

Theatre 2: "sex, lies, and videotape" (†).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)

Through Dec. 21: "Valmont" (†).

From Dec. 22: "Always" (Steven Spielberg), with Richard Dreyfuss, Holly Hunter, *John Goodman, and Brad* Johnson.

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)

Theatre 1: "Family Business" (Sidney Lumet), with Sean Connery, Dustin Hoffman, and Matthew Broderick.

Theatre 2: "We're No Angels" (Neil Jordan), with Robert De Niro, Sean Penn, and Demi Moore.

Theatre 3: "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation" (Jeremiah S. Chechik), with Chevy Chase, Beverly D'Angelo, and Randy Quaid.

Theatre 4: "Harlem Nights" (Eddie Murphy), with Murphy and Richard Pryor.

Theatre 5: "She-Devil" (Susan Seidelman), with Meryl Streep, Roseanne Barr, and Ed Begley, Jr.

Theatre 6: "Blaze" (†).

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)

Theatre 1: "The Wizard" (Todd Holland), with Fred Savage, Beau Bridges, and Christian Slater.

Theatre 2: Through Dec. 21: "The Fabulous Baker Boys" (†). From Dec. 22: "Valmont" (†).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)

Theatre 1: "Back to the Future Part II" (†).

Theatre 2: Through Dec. 21: "Back to the Future Part II" (†). From Dec. 22: "Tango and Cash" (Andrei Konchalovsky), with Sylvester Stallone and Kurt Russell.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)

Theatre 1: Through Dec. 19: "Cage." From Dec. 20: "The Bear" (†).

Theatre 2: "The War *of the* Roses" (directed by Danny DeVito), with Michael Douglas, Kathleen Turner, and DeVito.

Theatre 3: "Family Business" (Sidney Lumet), with Sean Connery, Dustin Hoffman, and Matthew Broderick.

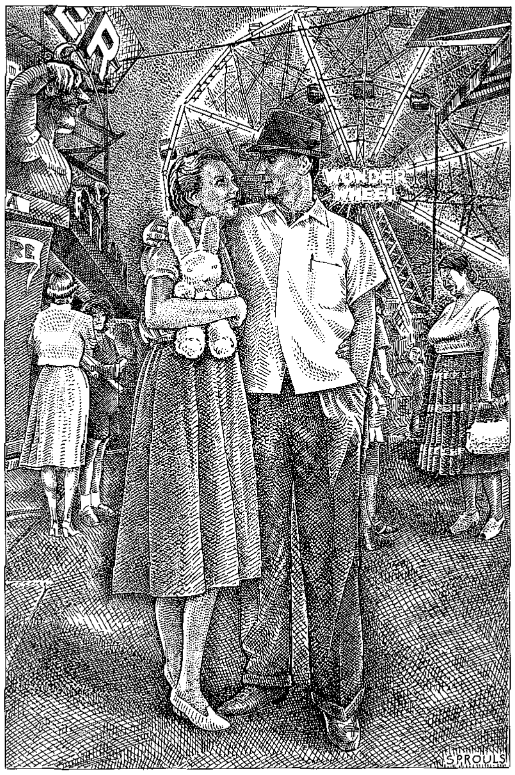
Theatre 4: "Look Who's Talking" (Amy Heckerling), with John Travolta, Kirstie Alley, Olympia Dukakis, George Segal, and Abe Vigoda.

Theatre 5: Through Dec. 21: "River of Death." From Dec. 22: "Tango and Cash" (Andrei Konchalovsky), with Sylvester Stallone and Kurt Russell.

Theatre 6: "Best of the Best" (Bob Radler), with Eric Roberts, James Earl Jones, and Sally Kirkland.

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)

"Blaze" (†).



Margaret Sophie Stein and Ron Silver in "Enemies, A Love Story"

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)

Theatre 2: "We're No Angels" (Neil Jordan), with Robert De Niro, Sean Penn, and Demi Moore.

Theatre *3*: "We're *No Angels" (Neil Jordan),* with De Niro, Penn, and Moore.

Theatre 4: "She-Devil" (Susan Seidelman), with Meryl Streep, Roseanne Barr, and Ed Begley, Jr.

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)

"Harlem Nights" (Eddie Murphy), with Murphy, Richard Pryor, and Redd Foxx.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)

Theatre 1: "Back to the Future Part II" (†).

Theatre 2: Through Dec. 21: "Back to the Future Part II" (†). From Dec. 22: "Always" *(Steven Spielberg), with Richard* Dreyfuss, Holly Hunter, John Goodman, and Brad Johnson.

Warner, 7th Ave. between 42nd and 43rd. (764-6760)

"The Wizard" (Todd Holland), with Fred Savage, Beau Bridges, and Christian Slater.

West Side Cinema 1 and 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)

Theatre 1: "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation" (Jeremiah S. Chechik), with Chevy Chase, Beverly D'Angelo, and Randy Quaid.

Theatre 2: "The Little Mermaid" (†).

Armin Mueller-Stahl and Jessica Lange in "Music Box"

REVIVAL HOUSES

Biograph Cinema, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)

Through Dec. 19: "All About Eve" (1950, directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz), with Bette Davis, Anne Baxter, Hugh Marlowe, Celeste Holm, and Thelma Ritter; and "The Letter" (1940, William Wyler), with Davis, Herbert Marshall, James Stephenson, Freida Inescort, and Gale Sondergaard.

Dec. *20-21*: "The *Old Maid" (1939,* Edmund Goulding), with Bette Davis, Miriam Hopkins, Jane Bryan, and George Brent; and "In This Our Life" (1942, John Huston), with Davis, Olivia de Havilland, George Brent, and Dennis Morgan.

Dec. 22-23: "Jezebel" (1938, William Wyler), with Bette Davis, Henry Fonda, George Brent, and Fay Bainter; and "The Little Foxes" (1941, Wyler), with Davis and Herbert Marshall.

Dec. 24-25: "The Bride Came C.O.D." (†); and "The Man Who Came to Dinner" *(1942, William Keighley), with Bette Da*vis, Ann Sheridan, and Monty Woolley.

Dec. 26-27: "Where Love Has Gone" (1964, Edward Dmytryk), with Susan Hayward, Bette Davis, and Michael Connors; and "A Stolen Life" (1946, Curtis Bernhardt), with Davis, Glenn Ford, Dane Clark, and Walter Brennan.

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)

Through Dec. 19: "Rebel Without a Cause" (1955, Nicholas Ray), with James Dean, Natalie Wood, Sal Mineo, Corey Allen, and Nick Adams; and "Over the Edge" (1979, *Jonathan Kaplan), with Matt Dillon.*

Dec. 20-21: "Dr. Strangelove" (1964, Stanley Kubrick), with Peter Sellers, George C. Scott, and Sterling Hayden; and "Red Monarch" (1988, Jack Gold), with Colin Blakely, Carroll Baker, and Ian Hogg.

Dec. 22-23: "We're No Angels" (1955, Michael Curtiz), with Humphrey Bogart, Aldo Ray, Peter Ustinov, and Joan Bennett; and "A Guy Named Joe" (1943, Victor Fleming), with Spencer Tracy, Irene Dunne, and Van Johnson.

Dec. 24: "The 5,000 Fingers of Dr. T." *(1953, Roy Rowland), with Peter Lind* Hayes, Mary Healy, Hans Conried, and Tommy Rettig; and "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory" (1971, Mel Stuart), with Gene Wilder and Jack Albertson.

Dec. 25-26: "It's a Wonderful Life" (†); and "A Christmas Story" (1983, Bob Clark), with Melinda Dillon and Darren McGavin.

From Dec. 27: "Johnny Handsome" (1989, Walter Hill), with Mickey Rourke, Ellen Barkin, Morgan Freeman, Forest Whitaker, Elizabeth McGovern, and Scott Wilson; and "Diner" (1982, Barry Levin*son), with Daniel Stern, Steve Guttenberg,* Rourke, Barkin, Kevin Bacon, Paul Reiser, and Timothy Daly.

Thalia SoHo, 15 Vandam St. (675-0498)

Dec. 18: "Abilene Town" (1946, Edwin L. Marin), with Randolph Scott and Ann Dvorak; "The Woman of the Town" (1944, George Archainbaud), with Claire Trevor and Albert Dekker; and "Angel and the Badman" (1947, James Edward Grant), with John Wayne and Gail Russell.

Dec. 19: "Thursday's Child" (1943, Rodney Ackland), with Sally Ann Howes and Wilfrid Lawson; and "Broth of a Boy" (1959, George Pollack), with Barry Fitzgerald.

Dec. 20: "It's a Wonderful Life" (†); and "Made for Each Other" (1939, John Cromwell), with Carole Lombard, James Stewart, and Charles Coburn.

Dec. 21: "La Grande Illusion" (1937, Jean Renoir; in French), with Erich von Stroheim, Jean Gabin, Pierre Fresnay, and Marcel Dalio; and "The Rules of the Game" (1939, Renoir; in French), with Dalio and Nora Gregor.

Dec. 22-23: "Last Year at Marienbad" (1961, Alain Resnais; in French), with Delphine Seyrig; and "Hiroshima, Mon Amour" (1959, Resnais; in French), with Emmanuèle Riva and Eiji Okada.

Dec. 24: "The Baker's Wife" (1938, Marcel Pagnol; in French), with Raimu; and "Topaze" (1952, Pagnol; in French), with Fernandel.

Dec. 25: "His Girl Friday" (†); "My Man Godfrey" (1936, Gregory La Cava), with Carole Lombard, William Powell, Mischa Auer, and Alice Brady; and "My Favorite Brunette" (1947, Elliott Nugent), with Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour.

Dec. 26: "Jungle Book" (†); and "Bird of Paradise" (1932, King Vidor), with Dolores Del Rio and Joel McCrea.

Dec. 27: "The Scar" (1948, Steve Sekely), with Joan Bennett and Paul Henreid; "Trapped" (1949, Richard Fleischer), with Lloyd Bridges; and "Port of New York" (1950, Laslo Benedek), with Scott Brady and K. T. Stevens.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

Dec. 18: "The Soft Skin" (1964, François Truffaut; in French), with Jean Desailly, Françoise Dorléac, and Nelly Benedetti; and "Two English Girls" (1972, Truffaut; in French), with Jean-Pierre Léaud.

Dec. 19: "How to Steal a Million" (1966, William Wyler), with Audrey Hepburn, Peter O'Toole, Charles Boyer, and Eli Wallach; and "Two for the Road" (1967, Stanley Donen), with Hepburn and Albert Finney.

Dec. 20: "Repulsion" (1965, Roman Polanski), with Catherine Deneuve, Ian Hendry, Yvonne Furneaux, and John Fraser; and "Obsession" (1976, Brian De Palma), with Cliff Robertson and Geneviève Bujold.

Dec. 21: "Dementia #13" (1963, Francis Ford Coppola), with William Campbell, Luana Anders, and Mary Mitchell; and "The Terror" (1963, Roger Corman), with Boris Karloff, Sandra Knight, and Jack Nicholson.

Dec. 22-23: "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari" (1919, Robert Wiene; silent), with Werner Krauss, Conrad Veidt, Lil Dagover, and Friedrich Feher; and "M" (1932, Fritz Lang; in German), with Peter Lorre.

Dec. 24: Theatre closed.

Dec. 25-26: "It Happened One Night" (1934, Frank Capra), with Claudette Colbert, Clark Gable, Walter Connolly, Roscoe Karns, and Alan Hale; and "Twentieth Century" (1934, Howard Hawks), with John Barrymore, Carole Lombard, and Ralph Forbes.

Dec. 27: "Deception" (1946, Irving Rapper), with Bette Davis, Paul Henreid, and Claude Rains; and "Beyond the Forest" (1949, King Vidor), with Davis, Joseph Cotten, and David Brian.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres. 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)

Theatre 1: Films directed by Vincente Minnelli. Dec. 18 at 2:30: "Ziegfeld Follies" (1944), with Fred Astaire, Judy Garland, and Gene Kelly. . . . ¶ Dec. 18 at 6: "Meet Me in St. Louis" (1944), with Garland, Margaret O'Brien, and Mary Astor. . . . ¶ Dec. 19 at 2:30: "I Dood It" (1943), with Eleanor Powell, Red Skelton, and Lena Horne. . . . ¶ Dec. 19 at 6: "Yolanda and the Thief" (1945), with Astaire, Lucille Bremer, and Frank Morgan. . . . ¶ Dec. 21 at 2:30: "An American in Paris" (1951), with Kelly, Leslie Caron, and Georges Guetary. . . . ¶ Dec. 21 at 6: "The Band Wagon" (1953), with Astaire, Cyd Charisse, and Nanette Fabray. . . . ¶ Dec. 22 at 2:30: "The Pirate" (1948), with Garland, Kelly, and Walter Slezak. . . . ¶ Dec. 22 at 6: "I Dood It." . . . ¶ Dec. 23 at 2: "The Band Wagon." . . . ¶ Dec. 23 at 6: "An American in Paris." . . . ¶ Dec. 24 at 2: "Kismet" (1955), with Howard Keel, Ann Blyth, and Dolores Gray. . . . ¶ Dec. 26 at noon: "The Pirate." . . . ¶ Dec. 26 at 2: "Brigadoon" (1954), with Kelly, Charisse, and Van Johnson. . . . ¶ Dec. 26 at 6: "Kismet."

Theatre 2: Dec. 18 at 6:30: Films by Marguerite Paris, who will be present. . . . ¶ Dec. 19 and Dec. 22 at 3 and 6, and Dec. 23 at 2:30 and 5: Four different programs of animated films from Canada. . . . ¶ Dec. 21 at 3 and 6: "La Offrenda" (1989, Lourdes Portillo), a documentary. . . . ¶ Dec. 23 and 24 at noon: Two different programs of "Sesame Street" episodes. . . . ¶ Dec. 24 at 2:30: "The Viking" (1931, George Melford), with Charles Starrett, Captain Bob Bartlett, and Louise Huntington. . . . ¶ Dec. 24 at 5:30: "The Silent Enemy" (1930, H. P. Carver), with Chief Yellow Robe, Chief Long Lance, and Chief Akawansh. . . . ¶ Dec. 26 at 2: "Nanook of the North" (1922, Robert Flaherty), a documentary. . . . ¶ Dec. 26 at 6: "The Viking."

Museum of Broadcasting, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—"MB Playhouse," a chance to see the television dramas you may have missed in the past thirty or so years. Dec. 19-23: Truman Capote's "A Christmas Memory" (1966, ABC), with Geraldine Page and Donnie Melvin. . . . From Dec. 26: John O'Hara's "Appointment in Samara" (1953, NBC), with Robert Montgomery, Edward Binns, and Margaret Hayes. Showings Tuesdays at 3 and 6 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 3. . . . ¶ "Twenty Years of Monty Python." An episode each from "Do Not Adjust Your Stockings" and "Ripping Yarns: 'Roger of the Raj.'" Showings Tuesdays at 12:15 and 5:30 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 12:15.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—In the Riklis Theatre: Five different programs of animated short films by Bob Clampett. Dec. 20-22 at 2:30; Dec. 23 at 1, 3, and 4:30; Dec. 24 at noon and 1:30; and Dec. 27 at 2:30.

Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—Dec. 19 at 1:30: "Cuba: The People" (1974, Jon Alpert, Keiko Tsuno and Yoko Maruyama) and "The Tube and the Eye." . . . ¶ Dec. 19 at 3:30: An episode each of "Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman" and "Saturday Night Live." . . . ¶ Dec. 19 at 6: The first episode of "An American Family" (1973). . . . ¶ Dec. 20 at noon: "The Eternal Frame" (1975, T. R. Uthco), "Documenta 6 Satellite Telecast" (1977, Nam June Paik, Joseph Beuys, and Douglas Davis), and "Media Burn" (1975, Ant Farm). . . . ¶ Dec. 20 at 2:30: "On Location: Steve Martin" (1976), coverage of the Bicentennial celebration. . . . ¶ Dec. 21 at noon: "Greetings from Lanesville" (1976) and three short videos. . . . ¶ Dec. 21 at 2:30: "Objects" (1977, Steina and Woody Vasulka), "Interpolation" (1979, Kit Fitzgerald and John Sanborn), and five other short videos. . . . ¶ Dec. 22 at noon: "The Police Tapes" (1977, Alan Raymond and Susan Raymond). . . . ¶ Dec. 22 at 2:30: An episode each from "Hill Street Blues" and "Dallas." . . . ¶ Dec. 23 at noon: "Red Squad" (1972, Pacific St. Film Collective), "No Lies" (1973, Mitchell Block), and "The Print Generation" (1974, J. J. Murphy). . . . ¶ Dec. 23 at 2:30: "Ganja and Hess" (1973, Bill Gunn), with Duane Jones. . . . ¶ Dec. 24 at 1: "Pink Flamingos" (1972, John Waters). . . . ¶ Dec. 24 at 3:30: "The Long Goodbye" (1973, Robert Altman), with Elliott Gould. . . . ¶ Dec. 26 at 1:30: "Speaking Directly: Some American Notes" (1973, Jon Jost). . . . ¶ Dec. 26 at 3:30: "That's Entertainment!" (1974, Jack Haley, Jr.). . . . ¶ Dec. 26 at 6: "Silent Movie" (1975, Mel Brooks), with Brooks, Marty Feldman, and Dom DeLuise. . . . ¶ Dec. 27 at noon: "Phantom of the Opera" (1974, Brian De Palma), with Paul Williams, William Finley, and Gerrit Graham. . . . ¶ Dec. 27 at 2:30: "Andy Warhol's Frankenstein" (1974, Paul Morrissey).

French Institute–Alliance Française, 22 E. 60th St. (355-6100)—Dec. 20 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Babette's Feast" (1987, Gabriel Axel; in Danish and French), with Stéphane Audran.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Ave. at 81st St. (879-5500)—Dec. 23 at 4 and 6: "Top Hat" (1935, Mark Sandrich), with Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers, Edward Everett Horton, and Helen Broderick.

Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., State Office Building, 163 W. 125th St. (873-5040)—Dec. 22-23 at 1, 4, 7, and 10: "Do the Right Thing" (1989, Spike Lee), with Lee, Danny Aiello, Ossie Davis, Ruby Dee, Giancarlo Esposito, and Bill Nunn; and "Making 'Do the Right Thing'" (1989, St. Clair Broune), a documentary. Mr. Nunn and Mr. Esposito will be present at 7 on Dec. 22. . . . ¶ Dec. 26 at 1 and 4:30: "The Education of Sonny Carson" (1974, Michael Campus), with Rony Clanton, Don Gordon, and Paul Benjamin; and "Sounder" (1972, Martin Ritt), with Cicely Tyson, Paul Winfield, Kevin Hooks, and Carmen Matthews. . . . ¶ Dec. 26 at 6:30: "I'm Gonna Git You Sucka" (1989, Keenen Ivory Wayans), with Wayans, Bernie Casey, Antonio Fargas, Isaac Hayes, Jim Brown, and Janet DuBois; "Joe's Bed-Stuy Barbershop: We Cut Heads" (1983, Lee); and "Hollywood Shuffle" (1987, Robert Townsend), with Townsend and Wayans. . . . ¶ Dec. 27 at 1 and 4:10: "Carmen Jones" (1954, Otto Preminger), with Dorothy Dandridge, Pearl Bailey, and Harry Belafonte; and "Stormy Weather" (1943, Andrew Stone), with Lena Horne, Bill Robinson, and Cab Calloway. . . . ¶ Dec. 27 at 7:30: "The Education of Sonny Carson"; and "The Spook Who Sat by the Door" (1973, Ivan Dixon), with Lawrence Cooke, Paula Kelly, and Janet League.

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.

IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Terrence Rafferty.)

Back to the Future Part II—It's all manic and wacky; it's all twists. The amiably mad inventor Doc Brown (Christopher Lloyd) rushes into the frame to tell teen-age Marty McFly (Michael J. Fox) about new emergencies in the year 2015 or 1955 or an alternate 1985 (brought about by their disrupting the space-time continuum), and they go hurtling off to set things right. The picture is fast and furious, but low in spirit; the inventiveness of the director, Robert Zemeckis, and his writing partner, Bob Gale, seems to be on a treadmill in a void. And yet the construction keeps you going—it's like a frenzied daydream that you don't want to break off. With Elizabeth Shue, Lea Thompson, and Thomas F. Wilson as the bullies Biff and Griff.—P.K. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/11/89.) (Bay Cinema, Manhattan Twin, Baronet, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, Olympia, and National Twin.)

The Bear—This French-made version of the romantic-wilderness pictures that Hollywood turned out in the silent era is a combination of raw pulp and gooey kitsch. A whimpering orphaned bear cub tries to attach himself to a huge male bear (nine feet two and weighing two thousand pounds), who has been shot in the shoulder and growls, rebuffing the infant. The plucky cub's feelings are hurt, but he ignores the threats, and follows the big bear, pleading for acceptance; he comes close enough to clean the wound with his tongue, and soon the two are kissing and licking. They have "bonded"; the music swells, and our hearts are supposed to be swelling, too. The director, Jean-Jacques Annaud, and the screenwriter, Gérard Brach, devised the plan for a gory, sentimental myth and then tried to get animals to act out the parts of the story that couldn't be faked; they fell back on sleight-of-hand cutting that never quite covers up the gaps. The movie doesn't exist except for its dubbed sound effects. Set in British Columbia in 1885; shot in the Austrian Tyrol and Northern Italy. Based on James Oliver Curwood's 1916 novel "The Grizzly King."—P.K. (11/13/89) (Ziegfeld; through Dec. 19. . . . ¶ Criterion Center; starting Dec. 20.)

Blaze—The love story of that old raspy-voiced rooster Earl K. Long, three-time governor of Louisiana, and the young red-headed stripper Blaze Starr is bawdy and satirical—it's Rabelaisian. Life was a banquet for Earl, and when he met Blaze he'd found the centerpiece. Ron Shelton, who wrote and directed, cherishes Blaze (Lolita Davidovich, in her first major screen role), and he adores Ol' Earl (Paul Newman), who used his swamp smarts to fight the white supremacists. But Shelton doesn't quite engage with the material; the picture is lame and rhythmless. Still, it's never boring, and it offers a ribald view of Southern politics that contrasts with the stern, melodramatic portrait of Earl's older brother Huey as a fascistic demagogue in the 1949 film "All the King's Men." Newman, using the low, hoarse voice of a lifelong stump speaker, seems an eccentric husk of a man. He begins too far into the character; we have to catch up. By the end, we're with him. With Robert Wuhl, Jerry Hardin, Gailard Sartain, Jeffrey DeMunn, Garland Bunting, and, in one scene, the real Blaze Starr.—P.K. (12/11/89) (Gramercy, Cinema I, Quad Cinema, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy 1.)

The Bride Came C.O.D. (1941)—Bette Davis, taking time off from her big dramatic roles, as an eloping heiress in a screwball farce, with James Cagney opposite her. The heiress is about to marry an obnoxious bandleader (Jack Carson) when her father arranges with a pilot (Cagney) to kidnap her and bring her home. The plane makes an emergency landing in Death Valley, and Davis and Cagney battle each other with wisecracks, and her rump hits a bed of cactus. The material is very tired and the production is so unpretentious it suggests financial embarrassment, but Davis shrieks her lines happily, and Cagney sticks out his ample gut and holds his ground. Both of them mug good-naturedly, and it's pleasantly fast. Directed by William Keighley, from a screenplay by Julius J. and Philip G. Epstein, from a story by Kenneth Earl and M. M. Musselman.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Dec. 24-25.)

Crimes and Misdemeanors—Written and directed by Woody Allen, it's a sad, censuring look at an eminent ophthalmologist (Martin Landau) and other crooks in high places who (in Allen's view) have convinced themselves that they can do anything, because they don't think God is watching. Allen is making the film equivalent of a play of ideas, and the ideas have no excitement. He's telling us not just what we already know but what we've already rejected. Woody Allen himself plays a little, grubbing-for-a-living documentary filmmaker who falls in love but can't compete for the woman (Mia Farrow) against a darling of the media, a tall, egomaniacal TV producer played with a wonderfully smug, screwy abandon by Alan Alda. Except for Alda, and Landau (when he's showing nervous impatience), and Jerry Orbach, who plays the ophthalmologist's shady brother, most of the large cast is proficient yet brittle and dull. With Sam Waterston (as a rabbi who's going blind), Anjelica Huston, Claire Bloom, Joanna Gleason, Caroline Aaron, Nora Ephron in a bit, and Daryl Hannah—uncredited, but looking so luscious she almost stops the show. The bland cinematography is by Sven Nykvist.—P.K. (10/30/89) (Loews Tower East, and Carnegie Screening Room. . . . ¶ 8th Street Playhouse; through Dec. 19. . . . ¶ Quad Cinema; starting Dec. 20.)

Dad—Making his first movie, Gary David Goldberg, the "creator" of the TV series "Family Ties," has attempted to open his sitcom sensibility to real life: he's filled "Dad" with therapeutic lore about old age and hospital care, as if moviemaking were a form of community service. Now seventy-eight and retired from his blue-collar job, Dad (Jack Lemmon) is dominated by his wife (Olympia Dukakis), who does everything for him, enfeebling him. But when his wife has a heart attack and is hospitalized, his Wall Street investment-banker son (Ted Danson) arrives, moves in with him, and stirs him to action: the helpless old coot comes alive. That's only the beginning; the movie keeps going through permutations until, finally, the banker hero's devotion to Dad helps him reach out to his own (estranged, college-age) son, played by Ethan Hawke. This is a saga: three (television) generations. At the start, Lemmon has vanished almost totally into his role, but soon he's so insufferably perky and boyish and obliging that you feel he deserves the puling lines that Goldberg gives him. With Kathy Baker, Kevin Spacey, Zakes Mokae, and J. T. Walsh. Based on the William Wharton novel.—P.K. (11/13/89) (Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ Cinema 3. Evenings only. . . . ¶ 86th Street East Twin; through Dec. 21.)

Driving Miss Daisy—With Morgan Freeman, Jessica Tandy, and Dan Aykroyd; directed by Bruce Beresford. (Reviewed in this issue.) (68th St. Playhouse. . . . ¶ 8th St. Playhouse, Chelsea Cinemas, and 57th St. Playhouse; starting Dec. 20.)

Drugstore Cowboy—Nihilistic humor rarely bubbles up in a movie as freely as it does here. Set in Portland, Oregon, in 1971, the story is about two couples who live together and travel around the Pacific Northwest robbing hospitals and pharmacies, grabbing fistfuls of pills and capsules. They're like a junkie version of Clyde Barrow's gang. The director, Gus Van Sant, takes us inside a lot of underground attitudes: the druggies are monomaniacal about leading an aimless existence—they see themselves as romantic figures. They're comic, but they're not put down for being comic. The picture keeps you laughing because it's so nonjudgmental. Van Sant is half in and half out of the desire of adolescents to remain kids forever. As the gang's twenty-six-year-old leader, Matt Dillon brings the role a light self-mockery that helps set the tone of the film, and Kelly Lynch is strikingly effective as the leader's wife. Also with James Le Gross, Heather Graham, James Remar, Max Perlich, Beah Richards, Grace Zabriskie, and William Burroughs. The script, by the director and Daniel Yost, was based on an unpublished novel by James Fogle, who's in prison for drug-related robberies.—P.K. (10/30/89) (Angelika Film Center. . . . ¶ Carnegie Hall Cinema; through Dec. 21.)

On December 27, you can see Otto Preminger redoing Bizet's "Carmen" in a black American idiom, and Brian De Palma rendering "Faust" as a rock cantata and horror fantasy. Cross-fertilization has rarely been this much fun.

When Dorothy Dandridge sashays onscreen in the title role of 1954's "Carmen Jones" (playing at the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., State Office Building), a sneering co-worker calls her a "hip-swinging floozie." Actually, Dandridge swings every part of her body. She gives a fierce, fearless performance in a movie that transfers the ultimate femme-fatale saga from the garrisons and Gypsy camps of Spain to the barracks and black neighborhoods of Florida and Chicago. Carmen makes parachutes instead of cigarettes, ruins a corporal named Joe (Harry Belafonte), and takes on a sports-superstar lover who is a boxing champ rather than a toreador. Marilyn Horne does a splendid dubbing job for Dandridge (of the stars, only Pearl Bailey is heard in her own singing voice), and few female stars have ever crawled over a man as provocatively as Dandridge slithers over Belafonte. She's infectiously uninhibited.

De Palma's 1974 "Phantom of the Paradise" (playing at the Whitney Museum) is a raucous spoof of seventies rock, media hype, youth movies, and slasher flicks—De Palma dares, among other things, to replay the shower scene in "Psycho" with a toilet plunger. Paul Williams is a Mephistophelian impresario, and William Finley is a tormented artist who sells his soul for rock and roll. The biggest scene-stealer is Gerrit Graham as a singer named Beef—a flabby rock Schwarzenegger who tries to look like Dietrich, shrieks when he sings, and, when he talks, sounds like Charles Nelson Reilly.

Enemies, A Love Story—With Anjelica Huston, Ron Silver, Lena Olin, and Margaret Sophie Stein; directed by Paul Mazursky. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Gotham Cinema.)

The Fabulous Baker Boys—Two lounge pianists (brothers, played by Beau and Jeff Bridges) add a vocalist (Michelle Pfeiffer) to their act, and she changes their lives. This romantic fantasy has a forties-movie sultriness and an eighties movie-struck melancholy. Put them together and you have a movie in which eighties glamour is being defined. The young writer-director Steve Kloves trips off your bluesy, narcissistic feelings about popular music and commercial-movie emotions; he invites you to laugh if you want to. (You feel the heat even if you're laughing.) The three stars seem perfect at what they're doing—newly minted icons. When Pfeiffer (who does her own singing) delivers "Makin' Whoopee," while crawling over a grand piano like a long-legged kitty-cat, she rivals Rita Hayworth in "Gilda."—P.K. (10/16/89) (Angelika Film Center, and Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ Metro Cinema; through Dec. 21.)

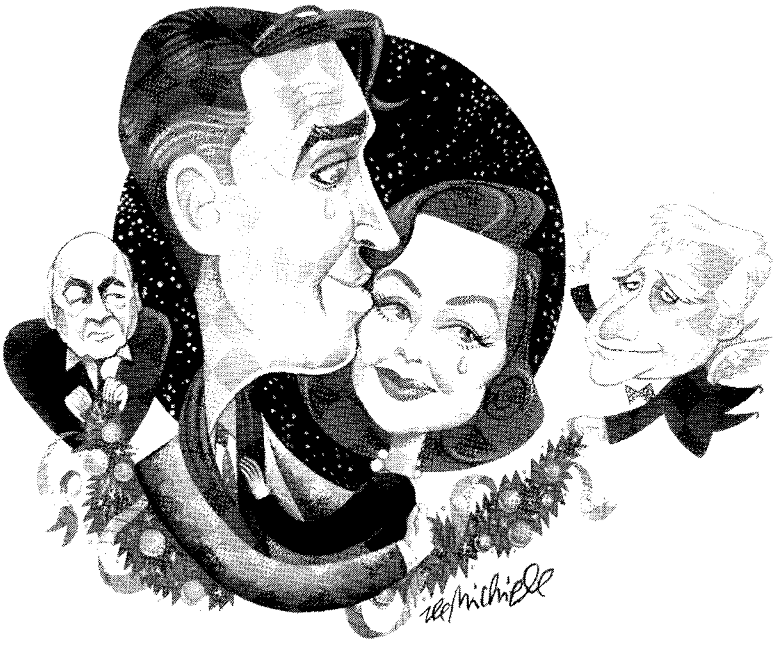
Henry V—This fast-paced version, adapted and directed by its young star, Kenneth Branagh, isn't exultant, like the version made forty-five years earlier by Laurence Olivier. Branagh emphasizes the price paid for war: the bloodshed. And, in keeping with his generation's supposed disillusion with war, he minimizes the play's glorification of the English fighting man. His conception of how to film the play is to look closely at the conniving, the misgivings, the ego wars. (This epic noir doesn't indicate why the French lost at Agincourt.) Branagh is not an overnight great moviemaker; his attempts at spectacular effects strain his inventiveness. But as an actor he has something of James Cagney's confident Irishness; he's intensely likable, with a beautiful, expressive voice, and a straightforwardness that drives the whole film ahead. He and the other performers are so up that you feel their pride in working on true dramatic poetry. It's a company of stars: Paul Scofield as the melancholy French king whose face foretells the doom of his army, Christopher Ravenscroft as the herald Mountjoy, Derek Jacobi as the Chorus, Judi Dench as Mistress Quickly, Robbie Coltrane as Falstaff, Brian Blessed as Exeter, Richard Briers as Bardolph, Richard Easton as the Constable of France, Alec McCowen as Ely, Robert Stephens as Pistol, Emma Thompson as Katherine, Geraldine McEwan as Alice, Christian Bale as Falstaff's boy, and, best of all, perhaps, Ian Holm as the chattering Welshman Fluellen.—P.K. (11/27/89) (Paris; through Dec. 21. . . . ¶ Quad Cinema, and Festival; starting Dec. 22.)

His Girl Friday (1940)—In 1928, Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur wrote "The Front Page," the greatest newspaper comedy of them all; Howard Hawks directed this version of it—a spastic explosion of dialogue, adapted by Charles Lederer, and starring Cary Grant as the domineering editor Walter Burns and Rosalind Russell as Hildy Johnson, the unscrupulous crime reporter with printer's ink in her veins. (In the play Hildy Johnson is a man.) Overlapping dialogue carries the movie along at breakneck speed; word gags take the place of the sight gags of silent comedy, as this race of brittle, cynical, childish people rush around on corrupt errands. Russell is at her comedy peak here—she wears a striped suit, uses her long-legged body for ungainly, unladylike effects, and rasps out her lines. And, as Walter Burns, Grant raises mugging to a joyful art. Burns' callousness and unscrupulousness are expressed in some of the best farce lines ever written in this country, and Grant hits those lines with a smack. His Burns is a strong-arm performance, defiantly self-centered and funny. The reporters—a fine crew—are Ernest Truex, Cliff Edwards, Porter Hall, Roscoe Karns, Frank Jenks, and Regis Toomey; also with Gene Lockhart as the sheriff, Billy Gilbert as the messenger, John Qualen, Helen Mack, and Ralph Bellamy as chief stooge—a respectable businessman—and Alma Kruger as his mother.—P.K. (Thalia SoHo; Dec. 25.)

It's a Wonderful Life (1946)—Frank Capra's most relentless lump-in-the-throat movie. The hero (James Stewart) is a self-sacrificial good man who runs a small-town building-and-loan association that is threatened by the local ogre, the wickedly selfish Lionel Barrymore. Thinking he has no resources left, the hero is on the brink of suicide when he is given a vision of what life would be like for his family and his town if he had never been born. Donna Reed plays his wife. Gloria Grahame is the town "fast" girl, and the excruciatingly familiar cast includes Thomas Mitchell, Henry Travers, Beulah Bondi, Ward Bond, H. B. Warner, and Samuel S.

Hinds. In its own slurpy, bittersweet way, the picture is well done. But it's fairly humorless, and, what with all the hero's virtuous suffering, it didn't catch on with the public. Capra takes a serious tone here though there's no basis for the seriousness; this is doggerel trying to pass as art. The picture developed a considerable—if bewildering—reputation, based largely on television viewing, about three decades later.—P.K. (Thalia SoHo; Dec. 20. . . . ¶ Cinema Village; Dec. 25-26.)

Jungle Book (1942)—Sabu appears to have a very good time as Mowgli, the child adopted by the wolves who lives among the wild beasts as one of them; he swings from tree to tree like a nursery Tarzan. In the dark-green jungles of this lush, handsome Alexander Korda production, directed by Zoltán Korda, Mowgli has more to do with human folk than in the Kipling book—Joseph Calleia is around, and also little Patricia O'Rourke, for a suggestion of precocious romance. Laurence Stallings, who wrote the screenplay, may wander a bit from Kipling, but the plot about a treasure, a python, and a ruined city is entertaining enough. Children will probably still love the movie—and adults will have a better time than they expect.—P.K. (Thalia SoHo; Dec. 26.)



Lionel Barrymore, James Stewart, Donna Reed, and Henry Travers in "It's a Wonderful Life"

The Little Mermaid—Disney-style kitsch. It's technologically sophisticated, but with just about all the simpering old Disney values in place. They're just slightly updated: the Little Mermaid—a teen-age tootsie in a flirty seashell bra—is like Sleeping Beauty plus tomboy spunk. The film does have a cheerful calypso number ("Under the Sea," by Howard Ashman and Alan Menken), and the color is bright—at least, until the mermaid goes on land, when everything seems to dull out. Pat Carroll provides the voice of Ursula, the Sea Witch; Samuel E. Wright provides the voice of Sebastian.—P.K. (12/11/89) (86th Street East Twin, Quad Cinema, 23rd St. West Triplex, Guild, and West Side Cinema. . . . ¶ Cinema II; through Dec. 19.)

The Little Thief—Claude Miller's movie, set in the early fifties, is about a rebellious provincial teen-ager named Janine (Charlotte Gainsbourg). The screenplay (by Miller, his wife, Annie, and Luc Béraud) is based on an original story by François Truffaut and Claude de Givray; Truffaut himself reportedly planned to direct a film of the story. This movie bears recognizable traces of the late New Wave director: it's gentle-natured and sympathetic to the young, and its structure is casual and anecdotal, like the Doinel movies. What it lacks is Truffaut's energy. Miller is a perfectly decent craftsman, and the movie is never unwatchable, but nothing drives it forward from one scene to the next, and Janine's lucklessness and her tough-kid spirit don't resonate as Antoine's do. For Truffaut, the story wasn't the most important thing; it's all that's left of him in "The Little Thief." Also with Didier Bezace, Simon de la Brosse, and Nathalie Cardone. In French.—T.R. (9/4/89) (Lincoln Plaza; through Dec. 19. . . . ¶ Angelika Film Center; starting Dec. 20.)

My Left Foot—The greatness of Daniel Day-Lewis's performance as the Dubliner Christy Brown, a victim of cerebral palsy who became a painter and a writer, is that he pulls you inside Christy's frustration and rage (and his bottomless thirst). There's nothing soft or maudlin about this movie's view of Christy: he's anguished and locked in yet excitingly insolent. The movie may tear you apart, but it's the story of a triumphantly tough guy who lived it up, and Day-Lewis's interpretation has some of the sexual seductiveness that was so startling in Olivier's Richard III. This is the first film of the Irish playwright-director Jim Sheridan, who wrote the superb screenplay with another Irish playwright, Shane Connaughton. With Brenda Fricker, Ray McAnally, Fiona Shaw, Ruth McCabe, and Hugh O'Conor playing Christy as a child.—P.K. (10/2/89) (Lincoln Plaza.)

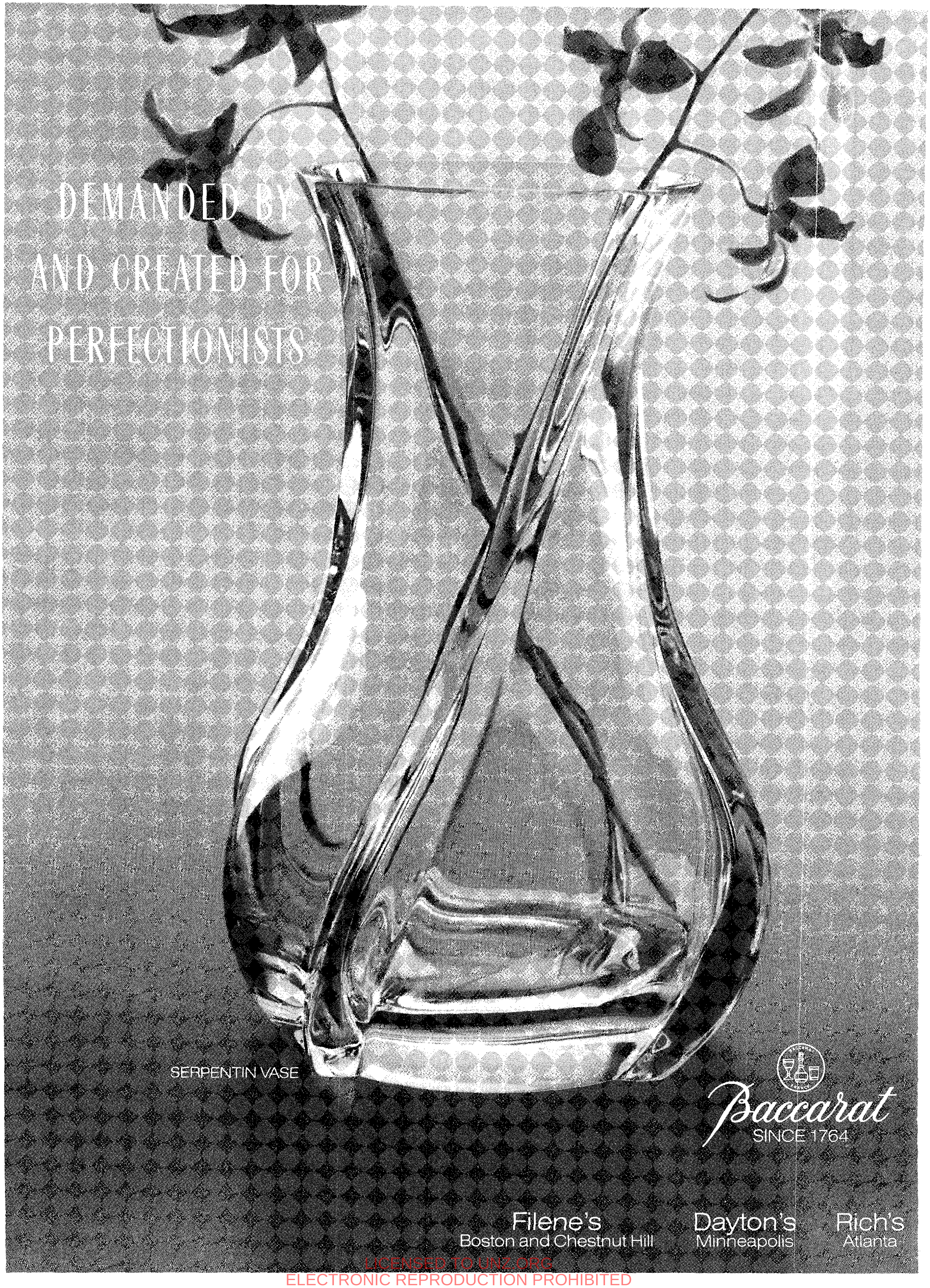
Sea of Love—This romantic thriller, written by Richard Price and directed by Harold Becker, has a simple and rather familiar story: a cop (Al Pacino) investigating a series of murders falls in love with one of the suspects (Ellen Barkin). But the movie isn't entirely predictable; it provides plenty of surprises, odd little riffs that keep us alert. And Pacino is amazing. He's playing a middle-aged, divorced, depressed, semi-alcoholic man who exposes himself to great peril by conducting an affair with a young woman who might be a killer. The actor's face has a saggy, disappointed look now, but there's something hopeful, a wary avidity, in his eyes. In this role, he seems to be startling himself with his own vitality. Barkin is perfectly cast as an ambiguous object of desire; she can look very soft or very, very hard, and the camera doesn't know quite what to make of her. It's a consistently entertaining movie, although Becker's direction has a tendency to flatten the highs in the material. And Price's script, full of sharp dialogue and smart ideas, nevertheless has a few characteristic lapses—most damagingly, a slackening of inspiration toward the end. Also with John Goodman (in good form, as the hero's partner), William Hickey, Richard Jenkins, Christine Estabrook, and Michael Rooker. (The title song, a pop ballad first recorded by Phil Phillips in 1959, is played throughout the movie, and it works beautifully.)—T.R. (9/18/89) (Worldwide Cinemas. Evenings only.)

Sex, Lies, and Videotape—Steven Soderbergh's smooth, handsome first feature generates a fair degree of psychological tension out of next to nothing. It's a triangle drama with a cunning little kink in it. The triangle consists of Ann (Andie MacDowell), a beautiful young Southern woman who has "never really been that much into sex"; her husband, John (Peter Gallagher), a sleazy yuppie lawyer; and her younger sister, Cynthia (Laura San Giacomo), who's sleeping with John. The kink is an old college pal of John's, named Graham (James Spader), a soft-spoken drifter who comes to town and changes everybody's life. Graham has sworn off sex, because, he says, it's the only way for him to stay honest: he's impotent, except when he's watching one of his dozens of home videos—all of them interviews he has conducted with women about sex. He's like a retired gunslinger, a laconic hombre who won't pull his artillery out of its holster because he's seen too much killin' already. This is "Shane" remade as a Southern psychodrama. But there's some real conviction in it—a mixed-up fervor that keeps us watching.—T.R. (8/7/89) (Angelika Film Center, and Cinema Studio.)

Sidewalk Stories—This low-budget first feature by Charles Lane—he's the writer, producer, director, and star—is a sweet-natured fable about homelessness in New York City. Lane plays a young sidewalk portrait artist who rescues a two-year-old girl (Nicole Alysia) after her father has been killed in a fight; the story is no more than a serviceable frame for a series of vignettes about the rigors of life on the street. Very consciously, the film evokes Chaplin: it's shot in black and white; there's no dialogue (until the last three or four minutes); Lane's character is resourceful, tenderhearted, and small (in one scene, he's menaced by a gigantic rival artist played by Tom Hoover, who was once a center for the Knicks); and the humor is of the universal variety, tending toward poignancy. Lane's not inventive enough, though—the comic adventures of the artist and the kid don't have the surprise of specific observation, and the absence of dialogue has the unfortunate effect of making all the characters seem a little simpleminded. The movie is never as bad as you fear it's going to be—Lane keeps the action brisk and lively—but you're always aware that it's a bit of a stunt. Also with Sandye Wilson.—T.R. (Angelika Film Center.)

Story of Women—Actually, it's the story of one woman, Marie Latour (Isabelle Huppert), a provincial wife and mother struggling to get by during the German Occupation of France. To help make ends meet, she provides rooms for the use of prostitutes and performs an occasional abortion; bored with her husband (François Cluzet), she takes a young collaborator (Nils Tavernier) as her lover, and then arranges an affair for her husband so he'll stop bothering her. For a while she thrives, but when the French authorities learn of her activities as an abortionist they decide to make an example of her: they condemn her to death, as a demonstration of the moral strength of their subjugated nation. The director, Claude Chabrol, and his co-writer, Colo Tavernier O'Hagan, have drawn their material from the true story of Marie-Louise Giraud, who was executed in 1943. At first, we're grateful for Chabrol's matter-of-fact approach: he respects the ambiguities of his heroine's character. But after a while his objectivity becomes frustrating: it doesn't have the chilling rigor of Louis Malle's 1974 portrait of a collaborator, "Lacombe, Lucien." Huppert, livelier than usual, gives a nice performance, but "Story of Women," finally, seems like just about every other prestigious French movie of the past few years: a well-crafted star vehicle in the guise of something more serious. In French.—T.R. (Lincoln Plaza.)

Valmont—A version of the Choderlos de Laclos novel "Les Liaisons Dangereuses," directed by Miloš Forman, from the script he prepared with the writer Jean-Claude Carrière. In the novel, the Marquise de Merteuil and the Vicomte de Valmont, French aristocrats in the late seventeen-seventies, play their sexual conquests with the cold calculation that might be given to war games—they turn innocent people into pawns. Here, their manipulations are so lightweight and offhand there's no sting to them. There has always been the danger that period movies will become intoxicated with jesters and fire-eaters and village fairs. "Valmont" has its share, but it's really into candlelit interiors and pale-rose bodices and rose-and-gold furniture. The story disappears among the cushions. As Valmont, the blandly handsome Colin Firth doesn't have the energy to be a lecher or even to make contact with the audience. With Annette Bening as the Marquise, Meg Tilly as Mme. de Tourvel, Fairuza Balk as Cécile, Fabia Drake as Valmont's aunt, and Jeffrey Jones.—P.K. (11/27/89) (Loews 19th Street East 6. . . . ¶ Festival, and Regency; through Dec. 21. . . . ¶ Metro Cinema; starting Dec. 22.)


DEMANDED BY
AND CREATED FOR
PERFECTIONISTS
SERPENTIN VASE
Baccarat
SINCE 1764
Filene's
Boston and Chestnut Hill
Dayton's
Minneapolis
Rich's
Atlanta

THE NEW YORKER

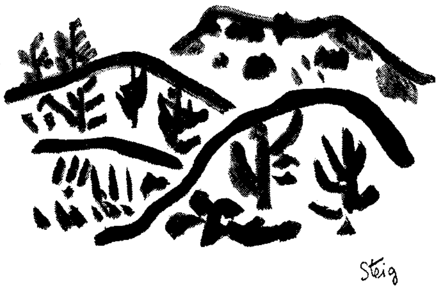
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

THE visit to Beijing last week by Brent Scowcroft and Lawrence Eagleburger, two of President Bush's most senior foreign-policy advisers, was, by all accounts, a visit full of smiles and good cheer. One photograph in the *Times* showed Mr. Scowcroft, the President's national-security adviser, striding toward Deng Xiaoping, China's "senior leader," in the Great Hall of the People and grasping Deng's hands as if the two men were long-lost friends overjoyed to see each other again. Another photo showed Scowcroft reaching across a candlelit banquet table and clinking glasses with Qian Qichen, the Chinese Foreign Minister. Afterward, an unnamed American official was quoted as saying that "both sides are happy about the discussions." Such festiveness in curious circumstances is hardly a new feature of Chinese-American relations: in 1972, Mao Zedong sat down to his first face-to-face meeting with Richard Nixon at a time when American planes were bombing China's ally Vietnam. To justify comparable behavior in 1989, when the American public had so recently witnessed the cold-blooded manner in which Chinese authorities deal with peaceful dissent, posed a special challenge, however. Secretary of State James Baker offered the odd assertion that it would only "compound" the tragedy of the Tiananmen massacre if the United States sought to isolate China from the international community. At a press conference a day later, President Bush expanded on this theme, declaring, "I don't want to take any further steps that are going to hurt the Chinese people." But the most telling comment was Scowcroft's remark, delivered at the dinner given by Foreign Minister Qian, that "we believe it is important that we not exhaust ourselves in placing blame for problems that exist."

Administration officials claimed later that the President's envoys had indeed expressed disapproval of last June's massacre to their Chinese hosts, but Scowcroft, in his statement, was clearly communicating a quite different message. In effect, he was suggesting that the past be forgotten. That this was the Administration's aim was underscored by a quote in the *Times* from a Bush official: "We hope that we have reached the point where time heals all wounds, and that once the public gets used to more normalized contacts it won't be focussed on the past."

The Administration might have realized its hope had the Chinese immediately reciprocated with some such gesture as dropping charges against Fang Lizhi and his wife, Li Shuxian, the dissidents now living in the American Embassy in Beijing. Instead, the authorities continued their domestic crackdown. According to Liu Binyan, a former reporter for the *People's Daily*, who spoke at Princeton a few weeks ago, strong-arm tactics against university students in China increased dramatically this fall. Many students were ordered to write new "self-criticisms" of their participation in the uprising last spring. At Qinghua University, China's equivalent of M.I.T., four students leaped to their deaths from a high building—a communal suicide that Liu attributed to the government's campaign of intimidation. Meanwhile, Bush stands behind his veto (undertaken on the demand of the Chinese government) of a bill overwhelmingly passed in Congress to grant visa extensions to Chinese students in this country.



At a moment when the peoples of Eastern Europe were streaming into the streets and toppling authoritarian governments by peaceful means, for the Bush Administration to welcome back into the international community a government that had brutally crushed its own citizens six months earlier was startling. Yet no one familiar with the record of recent American dealings with China could be genuinely surprised by Bush's initiative. The American envoys' visit represented the culmination of what has been Bush's policy ever since, under pressure from Congress, he half-heartedly imposed economic sanctions shortly after the massacre; namely, a return to business as usual.

As the writer Marie Gottschalk pointed out in the fall issue of *World Policy Journal*, Bush lifted the ban on American military sales to China less than a month after the Tiananmen killings, in order to allow the shipment of forty-eight million dollars' worth of military aircraft to the People's Republic. Bush's suspension of high-level meetings between American and Chinese officials was contravened in August, when James Lilley, the American Ambassador to China, appeared at a banquet in Tianjin to help celebrate the signing of a long-term contract between China and an American-based company. Just last week, the White House announced that all bans on "normal commercial" exports to China, including satellites, may soon be lifted.

Bush's actions are in keeping with the indulgence of repression which has characterized America's China policy ever since the Nixon years. That is hardly surprising, for Bush was President Ford's representative in China, and Scowcroft and Eagleburger are longtime associates of Henry Kissinger, Nixon's national-security adviser. Scowcroft and Eagleburger, in fact, worked with Kissinger both in government and after he became a private consultant to multinational corporations. Bush received briefings from both Kissinger and Nixon after their separate visits to Beijing this fall, and it was Nixon who brought back Deng's message that it was up to the United States to make the first move to improve the strained relations between the two countries.

This Bush has now done, maintaining, as Nixon and Kissinger did nearly twenty years ago, that good relations with China are essential to counter Soviet influence in Asia. In the Gorbachev era, however, that argument no longer convinces. A more plausible motivation is economics. Bush's eagerness to resume commercial relations despite China's appalling human-rights record suggests that in his view China is less a country of a billion people than a market of a billion consumers, and that United States access to that market must be protected. No one can disagree with the President that China is important, but in this instance there need be no contradiction between our economic and geopolitical interests and our democratic goals. Mr. Bush thinks of himself as a pragmatist, but is it really in the long-term interests of the United States for us to ally ourselves with an aging, widely hated ruling clique, which may well be out of power before long? Doing so could well alienate the progressive forces in China and leave us, at this pivotal moment in world affairs, once again on the wrong side of history.

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Extra-Artistic

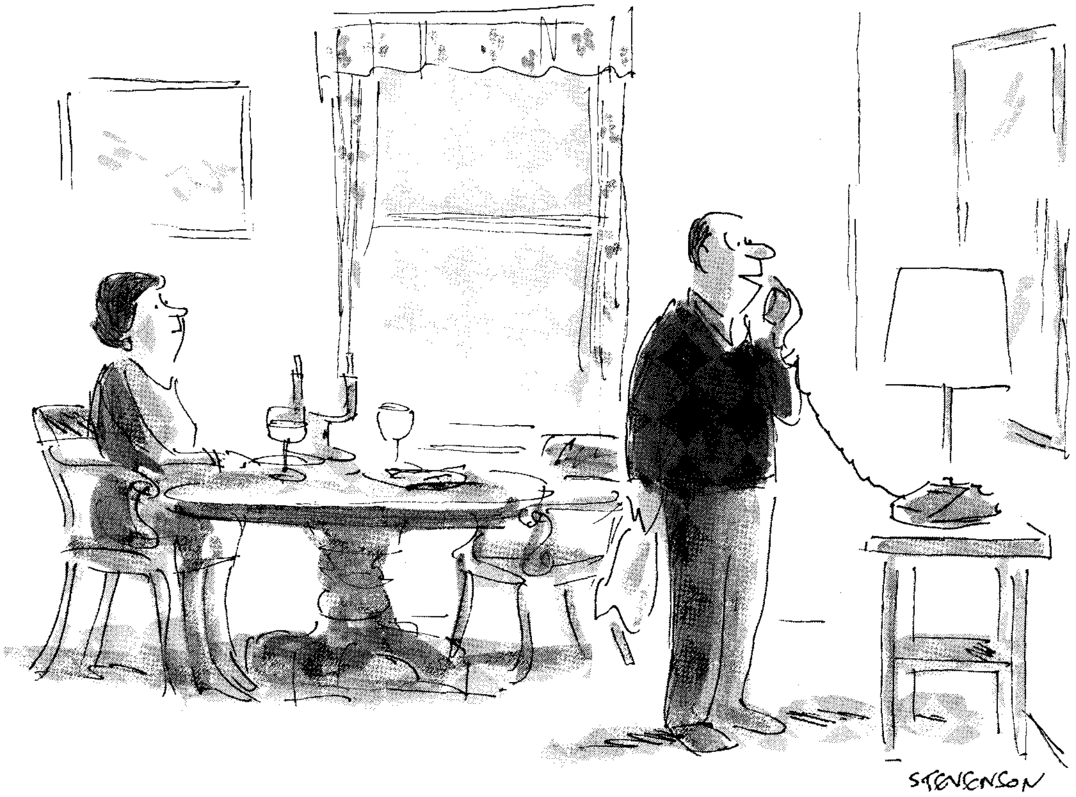
THE Midtown Cowboy describes the kind of street photography he does late at night in Times Square as free-lancing. His company, which consists of him and two partners, a few sandwich boards of photographs taken in Times Square and in Atlantic City, and banners he uses as backdrops, is called Fun City Productions, and his motto is "Keep the Fun in Fun City." He uses a kind of Polaroid camera, with a collapsible bellows behind the shutter, that is no longer made. When he arrives in Times Square, he removes his walking shoes, puts on a pair of cowboy boots, and tucks his pants into them. He wears a cowboy hat, and on cold nights he wears a brown shearling coat, like the Marlboro Man's. He has a slightly bowlegged gait, as if he had spent his life on horseback. He is from Yonkers. His partners are New York, New York Slim and Ace Photographer from Harlem West the Best.

The Midtown Cowboy specializes in photographs of lovers. When a couple approaches one of the principals in Fun City Productions, New York, New York Slim says, "All right, lovers, you're next," and waves toward one of the banners he and the Midtown Cowboy have hung in a row outside a Broadway store. Periodically, New York, New York Slim says this to no one at all. When Slim takes a picture, he positions the subject underneath the legend at the top of the banner, or in line with the drawing on it, and says, "One, two, and a fa-a-ast *three!*"

Times Square after midnight is full of photographers who have hung banners and are hustling business. On a recent Saturday night, some of the banners said "Teenage Love—Don't Hurt Me Again," "Do You Like What You See," "Too Hot to Handle!" (that one showed a firecracker, with the fuse lit), "She's My Fantasy," "The Big Payback," "My Appearance Is No Joke," and "Girls the Girls They Love Me." All these other photographers are imitators of the Midtown Cowboy, he says. He calls them copycats. Not to their faces, of course. The Midtown Cowboy began doing street photography in Harlem, outside the Apollo, where he also had a studio. This was during the sixties. Because he felt that Harlem was declining, he moved downtown, first to a studio at 1501 Broadway, then to a place on the street outside it, then to a spot on Restaurant Row, then back into Times Square. During the seventies, he had just a chair, and then he got the idea of using a backdrop.

The Midtown Cowboy's banners feature scenes. He has one with Batman, one with the California Raisins, one with Tom and Jerry, and one of Mickey and Minnie Mouse dancing (lovers jump at that). All his banners are airbrushed and full of motion and excitement, and are compelling to the eye. He has them made by The Mighty Shirt Kings, in Queens. Sometimes he suggests an idea, and sometimes he just asks for a new banner. "You try not to be a copycat, but you can't be com*plete*ly original," he says. "A new song, a new movie comes out, you do it. You got to move with the times."

A street photographer usually carries a number of banners, perhaps as many as twelve, and hangs them up with duct tape as he has time. Often he will have four or five up when he begins working, and whenever he gets a moment he will put up more. It is time to make new banners when the police have arrived and confiscated your present ones, along with your camera. The photographers say that the police make a sweep to arrest peddlers in Times Square around six in the evening, they process those arrests and are back on the street around ten-thirty, for another sweep, and then they go home. The photographers don't feel completely secure in this reckoning, though. A good way to stop the heart of a street photographer is to be a white male and walk up to him wearing a leather jacket. If you are talking to a street photographer, and one of those Muslims who wear white robes and combat boots and sell incense and body oils and copies of the Koran comes up and puts his finger to his nose, then forget about it. He's saying you smell



“And to think if I hadn’t been home having dinner I might have missed this wonderful investment opportunity.”

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bad, you’re a cop. And the photographer who was telling you where he gets the ideas for his banners will suddenly say that it’s not his business, he doesn’t know anything about it, he’s not involved.

The Midtown Cowboy describes his photographs as extra-artistic. For an additional charge, he will blow up a photograph. Lovers who request a blowup meet the Cowboy at Nathan’s in Times Square on Monday for delivery.

The name of the photographer who sets up on the corner opposite the Cowboy’s is Danny. He lives in the Bronx. Danny and the Midtown Cowboy have never met, and that is probably a good thing, since Danny, who has many years on the Cowboy, says, “I’m the one started this idea with the backgrounds. One guy had this big chair, and he used to use it on the street, and I had this big chair in my basement and I had a background there, so one time I was thinking, What if I brought the background down with the chair? People got the rest of the idea from that.”

Danny is short and compact, and currently favors red-and-white high-top sneakers. When business is slow, he will sometimes say, “Who’s next on my case? Step right up. This is my place.” He makes his own banners. How long it takes depends on how complicated he makes them and whether he decides to highlight the letters. He says that his first banner to have words on it said “New York Fresh.” It was acquired, shortly after completion, for the New York City Police Department’s collection. Some of his current banners say “I’m 100% Lovable,” “Shower Me with Your Love,” “However Do You Want It,” and “Make It Last Forever.” He brings to Times Square a fan-backed wicker chair that looks like a throne. He will set up banners in a row to the corner and then around it if he has time. He says if you get caught by the police it’s at least overnight in jail, except around holidays, when it can be longer, because the courts get a backlog. Another problem for photographers in Times Square is counterfeit bills, especially at this time of year. The paper used for fakes is slippery and thin, but when your hands get cold you can’t always feel the texture.

Hothouse Rock

POSTCARDS from a friend on a hurried business trip to London:

Monday. No time for sights and sounds, but I’m dying to go see the terrific new Irish group Hothouse Flowers if they’re playing here. I’m staying in a flat off Tottenham Court Road, where there’s a long, dizzy stretch of electronics and video stores. Movie theatre playing “sex, lies, and videotape.” Music item in paper refers to “Paul McCartney’s ineffably twee ‘When I’m 64.’ ” Item on radio: Woman in Sheffield beat off an eagle with a towel when it swooped into her kitchen and grabbed her toy poodle, Dinky. BBC is going to start televising Parliament debates (from the waist up).

Tuesday. No Hothouse Flowers listings in *Melody Maker*, the pop weekly. The Stone Roses are hot. Some other groups playing in Britain: Intelligent Flies, Pumpkin Fairies, Pink Turds in Space, Death by Milk Float, Membranes, Headless Chickens, Mean Red Spiders, Pig Meat, Ned’s Atomic Dustbin, Elvis Has Left the Building, New Fast Automatic Daffodils, Herbal Remedy, God’s Little Monkeys, Me and Dean Martin.

Wednesday. Creator of TV cartoon “Katman” on chat show explains origin of his creation: “I was sitting one night at my drawing board, and in through the window flew a cat.” I’m bringing home a box of Brekkies (made with real pilchard) for my cat.

Thursday. Miss Thanksgiving dinner. Ate some crumpets and had spicy Thai food in Soho. Rock group (tall hair, black leather) dining in corner with their manager. (Must have been manager—older guy, bald, not in leather and studs.) Group looked familiar, but can’t place them. Not too outrageous-looking. Thrash metal?

Friday. Prague uprising on TV. Dubcek taking bow before sea of demonstrators. Kid in pink parka astride dad’s shoulders. Sound of rock music from somewhere. Margaret Thatcher, on “breakfast TV” over in the United

States, says, "I have never been a lame duck in my life. I'm not going to start being one now." Is there a group called the Lame Ducks? Still looking for Hothouse Flowers, with their shamrock-soul-Gaelic-Jersey-gospel-R. & B. sound inspired by Irish folktales. Most often heard expressions this week: "Right" and "Brilliant!"

Saturday. Great luck. At Virgin Megastore, I found a gorgeous poster of Hothouse Flowers and a mini-CD of "Easier in the Morning" that includes a couple of songs not on their album "People." On it they do a live version of their hit "Feet on the Ground" and the traditional folk song "Carrickfergus." Hothouse Flowers are five young guys with poetic names—Liam Ó Maonlaí, Fiachna Ó Braonáin, Peter O'Toole, Leo Barnes, and Jerry Fehily. They were street musicians and got discovered by U2 after they won a Dublin street buskers' competition. When Fiachna Ó Braonáin was a little boy, the first concert he went to was the Police. Liam Ó Maonlaí, the lead singer, whose voice reminds me a little of Springsteen's, studied piano and probably didn't hear groups like Ned's Atomic Dustbin till he was nearly grown.

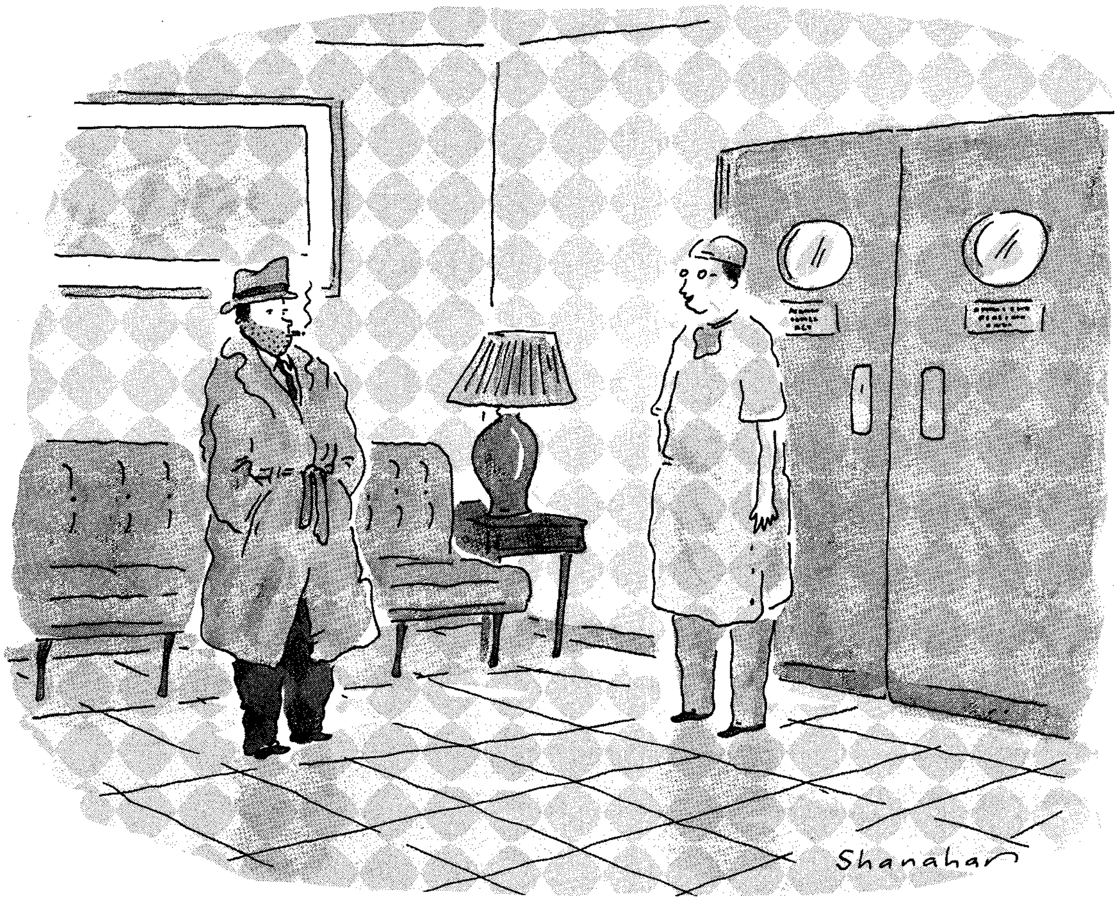
Sunday. At last, I found a couple of hours free, and took the tube to Kew Gardens. Cold day, but peaceful and cozy in the hothouses. Tropical plants climbing and gushing their way across the walks, spiralling to the glass roof. A lot of the plants could be rock groups: the Ericas; Devil's Cotton; the Bird Chillies (source of tabasco); the Tamarillos (or Tree Tomatoes); Red Passion; Chinese Gooseberries; the Spear Lilies; Grass Tree (basically punk: reckless spikes springing from a palm stump); Old Man Saltbush; the Wooly Cloak Ferns; Doodia Maxima; the Lobster Pot Pitcher (carnivorous!); the Blunt Green Hoods; the Cobra Lilies; the Giant Water Lilies; the Floating Water Weeds; the Cloud Forest; and, of course, the Living Stones. The Living Stones are lithops, remarkable clusters of plants camouflaged as small rocks. Only the tips of their swollen leaves are exposed to intense sunlight. They look like thick pairs of lips spitting out wonderful flowers. Think about it—rocks, stones, rolling stones. Throwing stones at glasshouses.

Sunday, continued: Lingered at Kew in the world's largest Victorian glasshouse, with the world's tallest glasshouse plant—a fifty-eight-foot palm tree. In 1938, the tree was moved to the center of the building. There's a picture of the tree on a crawler, like the space shuttle on its way to the launchpad. A staircase spirals up to the balcony. Every thirty seconds, jumbo jets heading for Heathrow glide over. Up on the balcony, I suddenly saw—and felt and heard—the Concorde fly overhead, its landing gear down. No one else seemed to notice. It was like a glistening white bird that had risen from the hugging tropical garden and escaped.

Mushrooms

"IT'S time to celebrate and enjoy the fruits of the Goddess of Decay!" the invitation to the annual banquet of the New York Mycological Society began. Unable to resist a come-on like that, we presented ourself at the Officers' Club on Governor's Island for the celebration.

A sign at the bottom of the main staircase read "NY Mycologic Society." "Does that mean funguses and mushrooms?" a patron of the club, evidently not a mycologist, asked us. We told him that it did. Upstairs, in the U.S.S. Tampa Room, we found a table laden with mushroom appetizers, all of them prepared by members of the society. Mushrooms had been ground into pâtés, diced and sown into salads, tossed whole into vinaigrettes and casseroles. Many of the mushrooms in the appetizers had been picked in the woods. (We saw one dish labelled "Morel and Puffball Knish.") Others looked as if they had been collected at vegetable stands. We noticed that a mycologist next to us was wearing mushrooms: three flattish dried speci-



"It's a dame!"

mens, about the texture of fried eggs, mounted on a leather medallion hanging from a necklace.

"Trophies?" we asked her.

"They weren't edible," she admitted.

After appetizers, everyone moved across the hall to the Parapet Room for dinner. The business part of the banquet began with an announcement by the president of the society, Elinoar Shavit, of the topics of the winter lecture series: "Why We Can't Identify Many of the Mushrooms We Find, and What We Can Do About It"; "What Is a Species?"; "Western Australia—Mushrooms, the Mighty Eucalyptus, and Magnificent Plants"; and "The Mushrooms of the Earth and I." Afterward, we asked her what besides holding a banquet and offering lectures the society does in a typical year. She told us that the first mushroom-collecting walk of the season comes when the morels do, in May, and is followed by a short gap, during which there isn't "anything really interesting" to pick. Weekly walks resume in June, and continue until November. "Three years ago, I found oysters in December," she added. These expeditions all take place in the New York area, but the mycologists also go on forays to more distant spots: Vermont, Pennsylvania, Quebec. The truly dedicated leave the continent entirely. There are interesting mushrooms in Czechoslovakia and Nepal, Mrs. Shavit assured us. We asked how she would characterize 1989.

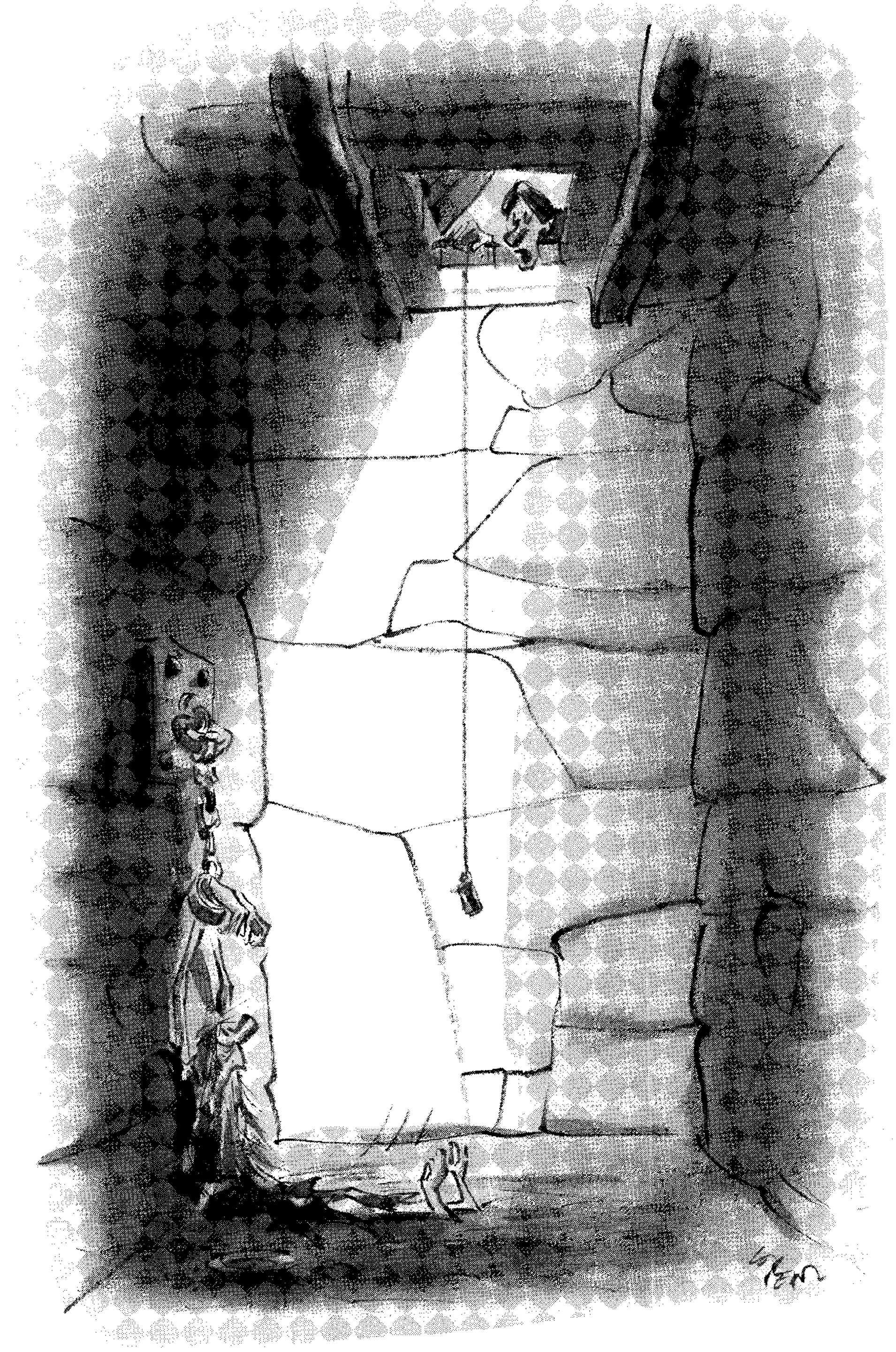
"A strange year," she said. "It was not a good year for boletes, but it was good for morels, oysters, and hen of the woods."

At the banquet, Mrs. Shavit's announcements were followed by the singing of the society's anthem:

Where root and stump lie mold'ring
'Neath leaden dripping skies,
There, there shall we forgather
As unwholesome vapors rise.
Deep, deep in the murky shadow,
There where the slime mold creeps,
With joy the stout mycologist
His pallid harvest reaps.

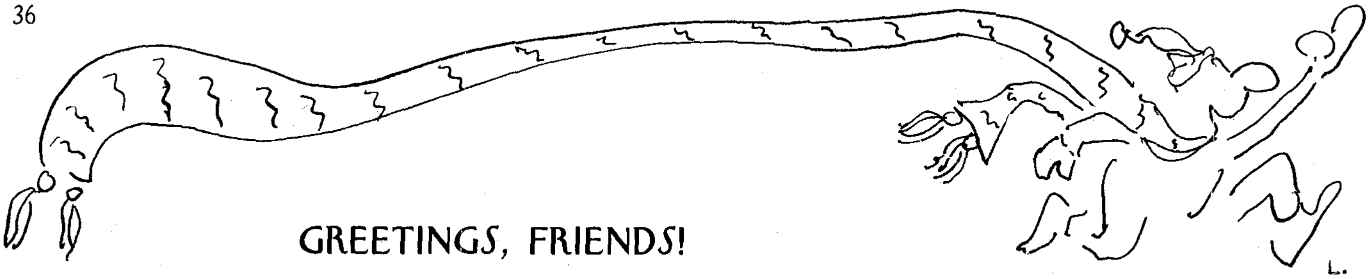
There was more of it, much more. The next speaker was Florence Tarlow, who had been present at the creation. In 1959, she said, she had taken classes at the New School, taught by John Cage, in music and in mushrooms, and "there weren't many people in either." Cage's first mushroom walk consisted of a jaunt of nine people to Rockland County, she recalled, and a reporter from the *Times* tagged along and misquoted everyone. When Ms. Tarlow sat down, the society thanked Commander Ronald Cummins, of the Navy, for letting it use the Officers' Club. "He told us he used to hunt mushrooms with only a book for guidance," one member remarked. "We're glad he's still with us."

The evening ended with a drawing for door prizes, among them a mushroom brush, tea towels with pictures of mushrooms on them, books about mushrooms, a mushroom-growing kit, and a German children's game, "Wir Sammeln Pilze," or "We Gather Mushrooms." We won a cotton pincushion in the shape of a mushroom with a white-spotted red cap: *Amanita muscaria*, the fly agaric. Poisonous.



"No cause for alarm—we're checking for radon emissions."

• •



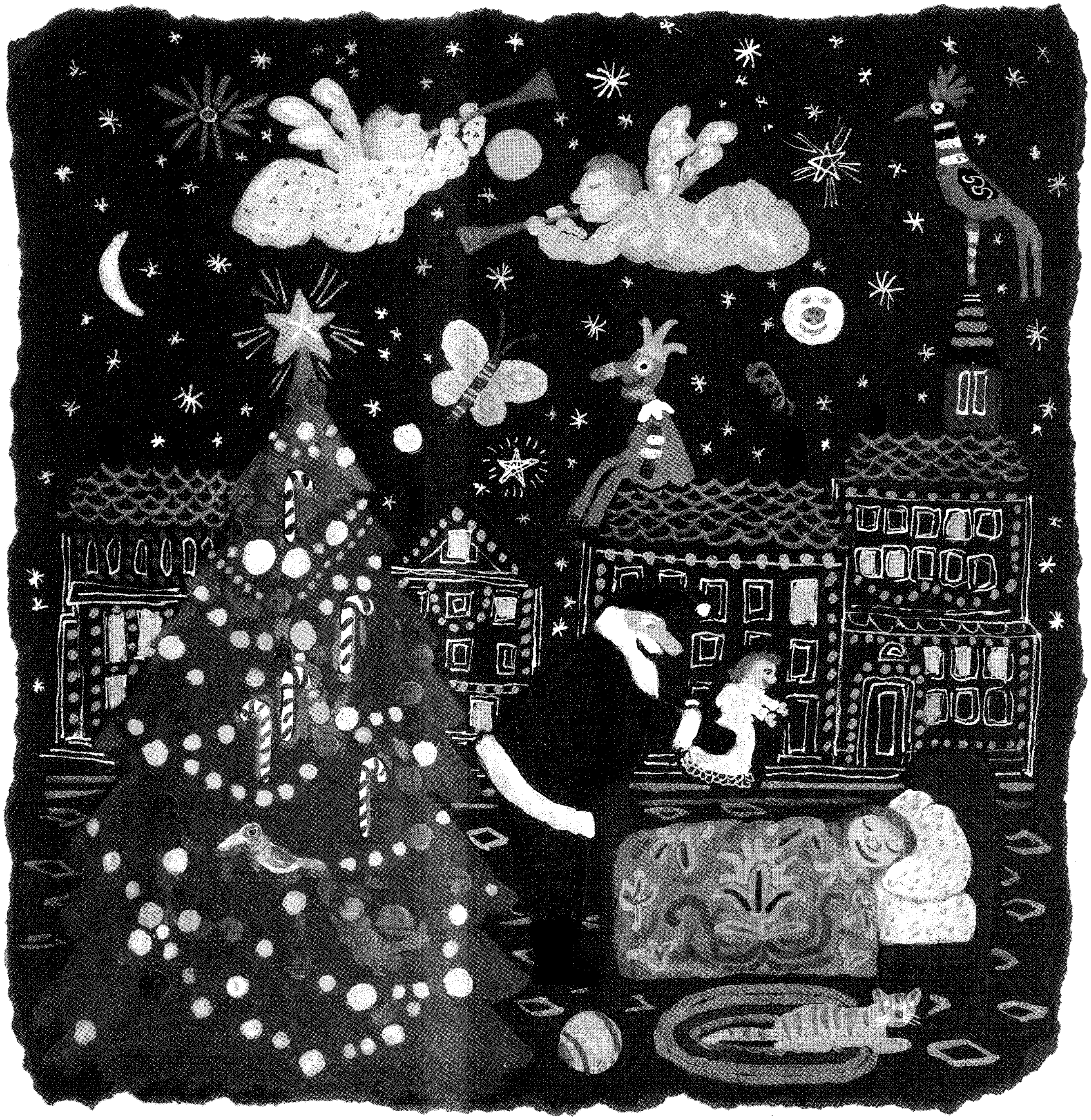
GREETINGS, FRIENDS!

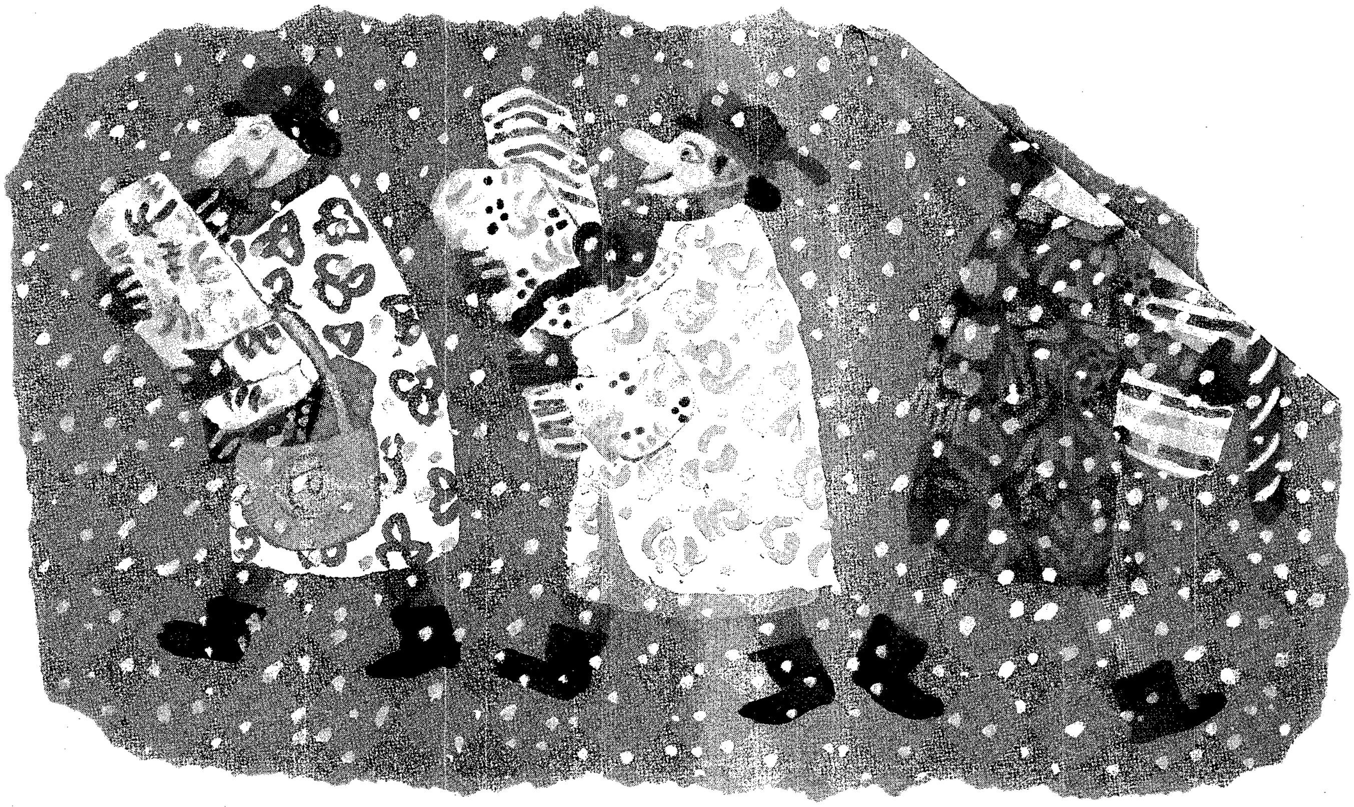
Hark the chime! The year is fleeting—
Time to start our annual meeting!
Sentient readers, would you try
Envisioning this page a pie:
Some deep-dish metaphoric mince
Your bard's concocted to evince
A taste of bygone Christmastimes,
With gentle thoughts and childish rhymes
And thrown-in carollings as well,
And homily and doggerel,
Which serve to say, when all is done,
God rest you, neighbors, every one!
Now bliss befall us, star or cipher:
Happy Christmas, Michelle Pfeiffer!
Barbara Boxer, joy on you, too;
Hail, ye Bosox, Archbishop Tutu!
Pax vobiscum, Sting, and *pax* on
Alan King, LaToya Jackson,
C. Ev'rett Koop, Lovely Billups,
Quincy Troupe, and Jayne Ann Phillips.
Come, choirboys, in *canzoni* loose a
Joyful noise for Tony LaRussa,
And further melodies in praise
Of Wolfgang Puck and Dottie Hayes;
And songs at dawn (a touch *aubade*-sy)
For such as Eduard Shevardnadze,
Then cooler strains, all David Byrne-y,
For Michael Frayn and A. R. Gurney,
Mr. Goodwrench, Freeman Dyson,
Judi Dench, and Michael Tyson!
May I advert at this sweet time
To certain favored friends of mine?
Of Nam June Paik I've found I'm fond;
I think the world of Greg LeMond.
Mookie Wilson! Nicolas Cage!
At my place, guys, you're all the rage.
I feel benevolence, what's more,
For Easy Goer and Albert Gore,
And trust a gladsome Yuley glow
Enfolds Bill White and Phoebe Snow,
And wish, within this Christmas card,
Delicious things for Molly Yard,
And brighter days some folks could use
In Charleston and in Santa Cruz.
Let's hear more toasts in Yule collations
For types in lively occupations,
Like Andrew Young, the doughty mayor,
Or Radu Lupu, Schubert player;
Chuck Jones, the wily Looney Tuner;
Malcolm Forbes, high-style ballooner;
Roger Kingdom, who's a sprinter;
Plus a playwright, Harold Pinter;
Penn Jillette, that glib Houdini;
Gabriela Sabatini
And Michael Chang (tennis twofer);
Sunday Silence, well-paid hoofer;
Margaret Thatcher, premier Brit;
And Blue Jay catcher Ernie Whitt.
Hey, Santa, startle in their p.j.s
R. J. Lurtsema, prince of d.j.s,
Donna Karan, Simon Schama,
Amy Tan, and the Dalai Lama.
Frequent fliers! Midnight hearties!
Hop aboard our Christmas parties:
With David Lodge and David Hare
We'll host a bash in Delaware,
And thence to Pensacola travel
With Glynis Johns and Václav Havel,
Or stuff a sock at Steamboat Rock
With Sarah Polley, Dr. Spock,
David Dinkins, Andie MacDowell,
Susan Nicely, and Colin Powell.
Our revelry in Beverly
Will take us all or severally
To Coos Bay or to Ketchikan
With Dr. Seuss and Gadge Kazan;
From there, with Anna Wintour, we
Could fly to Flint to light a tree,
And thence, with Richard Serra, tote
Some toys for tots in Terre Haute,
Where, jet-lagged to a fare-thee-well,
We'll have a nosh with Josh Mostel,
Or toast our toes at glowing brazier
With Art Agnos and Cora Frazier.
We'll catch our breath in Hibbing, Minn.,
And ask some super neighbors in,
Like Paula Cooper, Mackey Sasser,
Naguib Mahfouz, Ira Glasser,
Bo Wulf, Los Lobos, Peter Coyote,
And folks from No. and So. Dakoty.
Next day, by Eggemoggin Reach,
We'll stay and hoist a noggin each
With Kenneth Branagh, Chris D'Amboise,
Anita Brookner, Amos Oz,
Daryl Hannah (sans duenna),
Harold Ramis, Neil MacKenna,
Baryshnikov, and Maxine Groffsky—
And good old Mieczyslaw Horszowski!

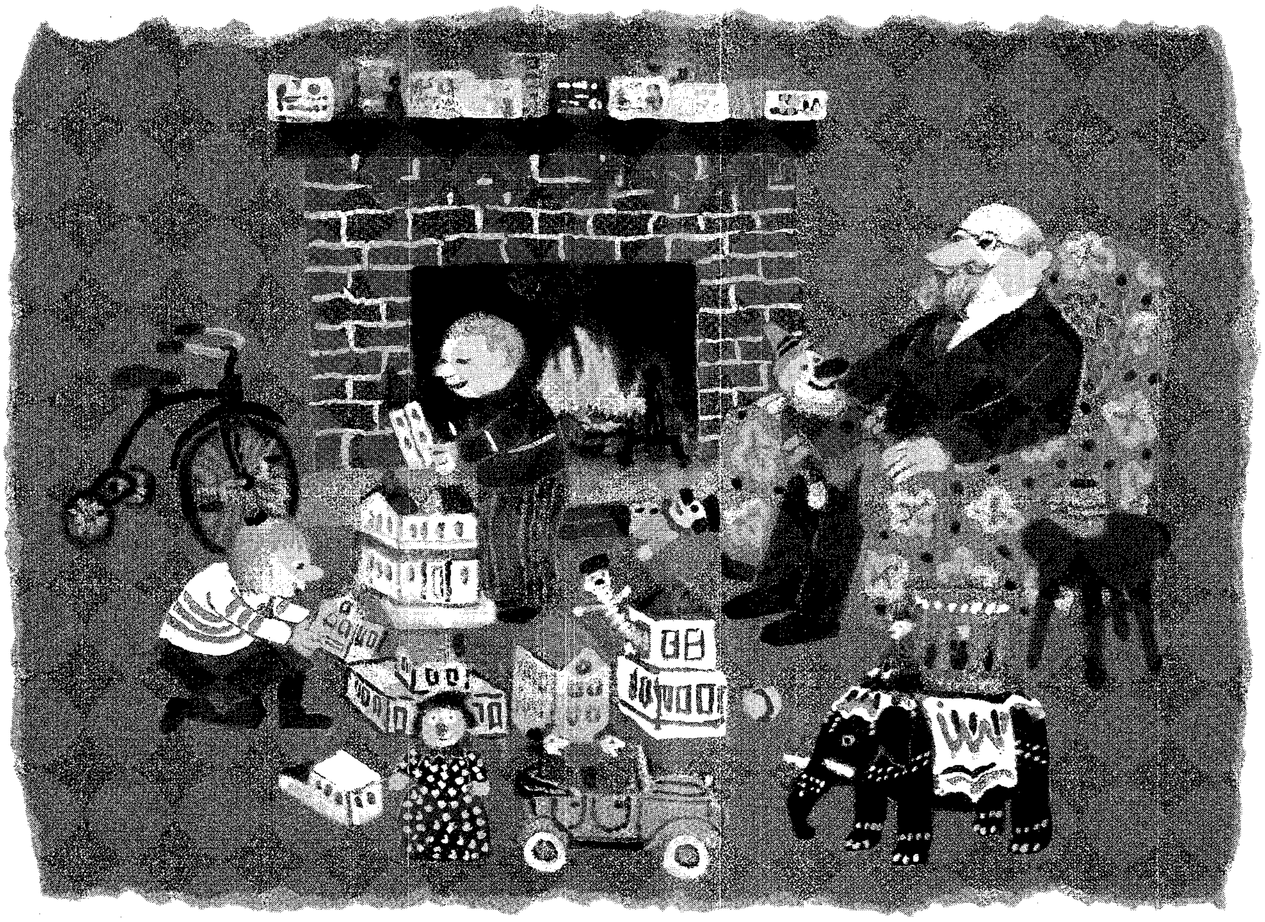
We end, old dears, in better cheer:
How sweetly Christmas comes this year!
Bright candles in the good king's square
Illuminate our midnight air.
Let peace descend, from alp to lowland—
Wesołych Świąt, chaps in Poland!
Fröhliche Weihnachten, West and East,
For all who flock to freedom's feast!
Happy *Nový Rok* (that's Czech), we say.
God bless us each this holiday!

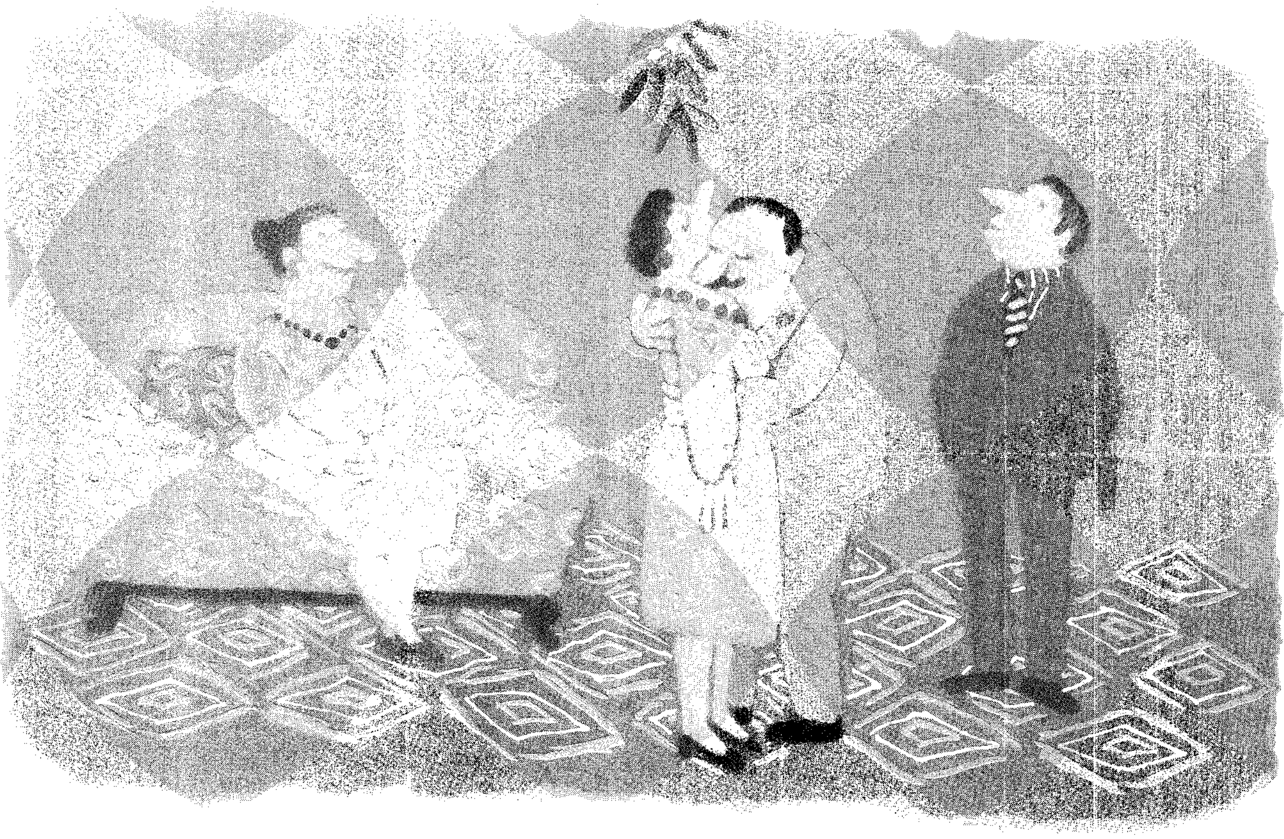
—Roger Angell

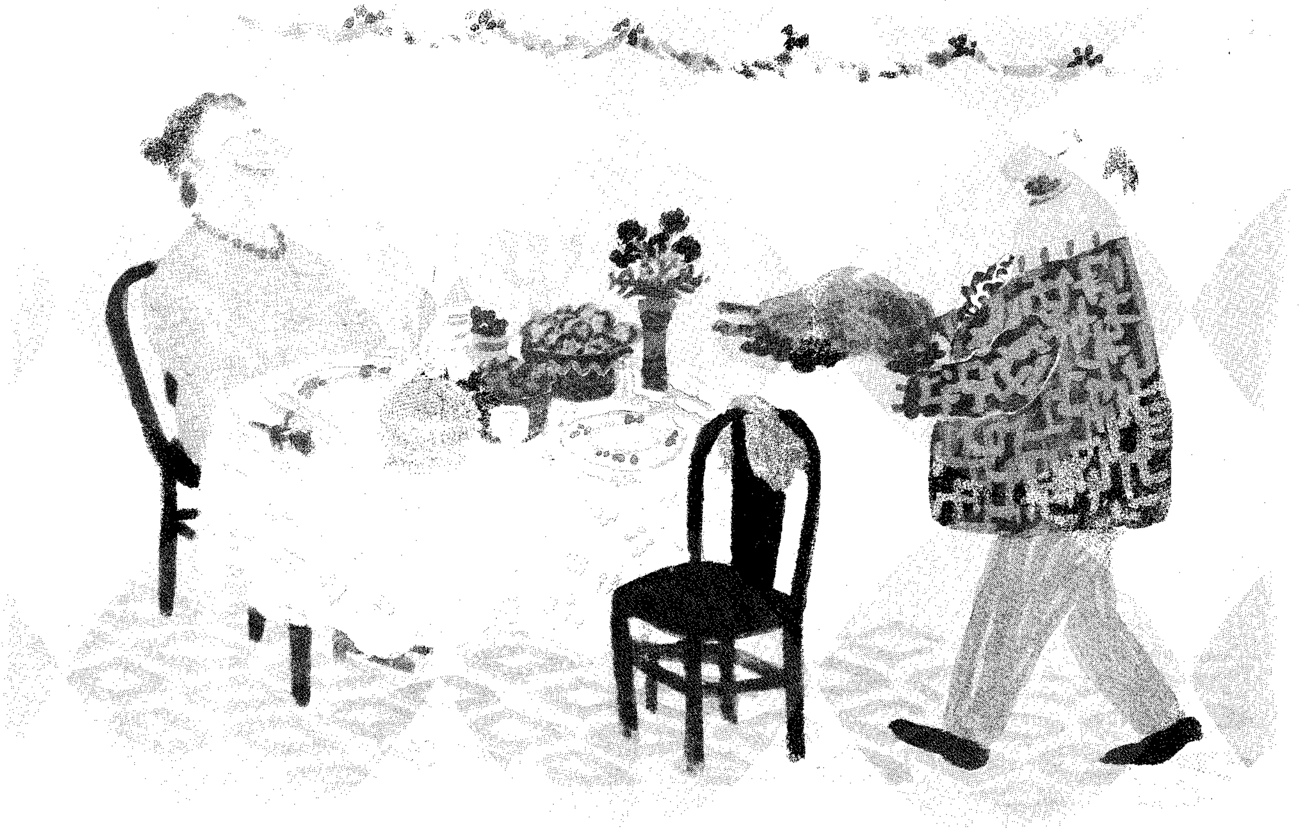
CHRISTMAS











W. Steig

A CHRISTMAS STORY

IT was Christmas Eve in Houston, and through the howling blizzard struggled the runaway nearsighted boy Jim, his T-shirt frozen to his back, his skinny arms limp from hauling his big golden retriever, Tony, who was wet and therefore much heavier than if the weather had been warm and sunny. Jim had left home that morning, because his folks were talking about flying to Aruba for the holidays and leaving him with the cleaning lady, and now big wet flakes were falling so thickly he couldn't see the nose on his own face—and Jim did have a pretty big beezer. "I'm done for, Tony," whimpered the myopic child sadly. Death was near. If only he had worn a coat or taken a limo! And then suddenly, with a loud *whump* and an *oof*, he walked into a small statue or something and fell down with Tony on top of him. It was a statue of a little black stableboy! This was his mom and dad's house! He had wandered through the blizzard in a full circle back to Hickey Avenue and the palatial home of his wealthy and irrepressible parents. He pounded weakly on the door with his small white hand.

BEFORE the door opens, let's extend a big welcome to the folks at DioNate, which is making this story possible, and to the more than forty-six thousand partners in the DioNate work experience. A story can be pretty expensive to develop. And this one, conceptualized in 1983 by an editorial team from Winston-Price, was sold to a major fiction consortium, the Oso Company, which spun off its communications holdings in 1985 to Carver Pharmaceuticals, which was taken over in 1987 by Sun Dry, the electronics/airline-charter/pet-food conglomerate, which then became part of DioNate. At this point, the story was only a bare outline—Rich Boy Finds True Meaning of Christmas and Dies in Blizzard with Dog—but $21,600,000 had been invested in it already. If the readers of this magazine had to foot the whole bill, this issue would have cost you $53.87! Quite a savings, thanks to DioNate!

THE door opened, and there was Alice, Jim's size-8 mom, in a beady blue silk gown from Italy or somewhere. "Jim! What?" she said. "You're outdoors! Sharon said you were in the solarium, using the tanning machine."

(Sharon! Why would she believe his sister Sharon, who was on drugs?)

"I ran away from home eleven hours ago, Mom!"

"Oh. Who's this?"

"It's my old dog, Tony. I've had him since he was a pup."

"Oh—I thought you had a pony."

The lobby twinkled with Christmas lights, pink and white and silver, and the rich, gloomy library was gaily festooned with pine boughs from the Hartz Mountains and red silk streamers and angels with spun-platinum hair. A sequoia wreath hung over the vast fireplace, where fragrant mesquite blazed away. In the glittering dining room, the table was decked with green linen, golden candlesticks, the rare Roi d'Alton china, with its hand-painted gold filigree, and the good silver from his mom's side of the family, the wealthy Chesterfields. And through the great onyx arch he could see, standing thirty feet high in the Chinese rotunda, the Christmas tree, the most beautiful one anywhere in the world! It cost four thousand dollars to airlift it down from the High Sierras and truck it east to Texas.

"It looks nice. Marlon did a good job. I like it traditional," said Jim, though he was so nearsighted the tree looked like an upturned skiff. His mom always had the house professionally decorated at Christmas. Last year, Marlon had gone in for a Georgia O'Keeffe look, with sand, cactuses, stones, bleached bones, and Christmas bulbs inside cow skulls, and the year before it was lasers. Then Jim noticed the table was set for fifteen persons. But there are only four of us, he thought to himself.

AS I mentioned, DioNate is picking up most of the tab for *publication* of "A Christmas Story," but, of course, corporate underwriting can't hope to cover all of the *writer's* costs. None of the $21,600,000 went to me, and I've had to spend a lot of time writing and rewriting and *re*writing to make sure the story is phenomenally good, and that's why I'm coming directly to you, my readers, and asking for your support. Only your generous gifts will insure that many more stories of this quality will keep coming your way. It only takes a minute to do this.

$10 (Contributor) ____
$25 (Patron) ____
$50 (Sustainer) ____
$100 (Good Neighbor) ____
$500 (Real Pal) ____
$1,000 (Racquetball Partner) ____
$5,000 (Best Friend, *limited to six*) ____

Visa ☐ Master ☐ Am Ex ☐ Other ☐
# ________________
Exp. Date ________________
Signature ________________

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

"WHY fifteen? Who's coming for dinner besides us?" asked Jim.

His mom shrugged. "Some people we met. I don't know. They seemed nice. A couple of fund-raisers from different colleges, our broker and his lover, some people from DioNate, and George Will, the ostrologist. He was on our cruise."

"Tony's cough is pretty bad," Jim said. "You don't suppose Dr. Will could give him a shot or something, do you? And I'm all pooped out. I gotta grab some shut-eye." He hauled the poor old pooch up the grand staircase and into Sharon's bedroom and boosted him up into her canopied bed. Tony groaned. How ironic to think that the dog might die on Christmas, here in this ornate bedroom the size of a gymnasium!

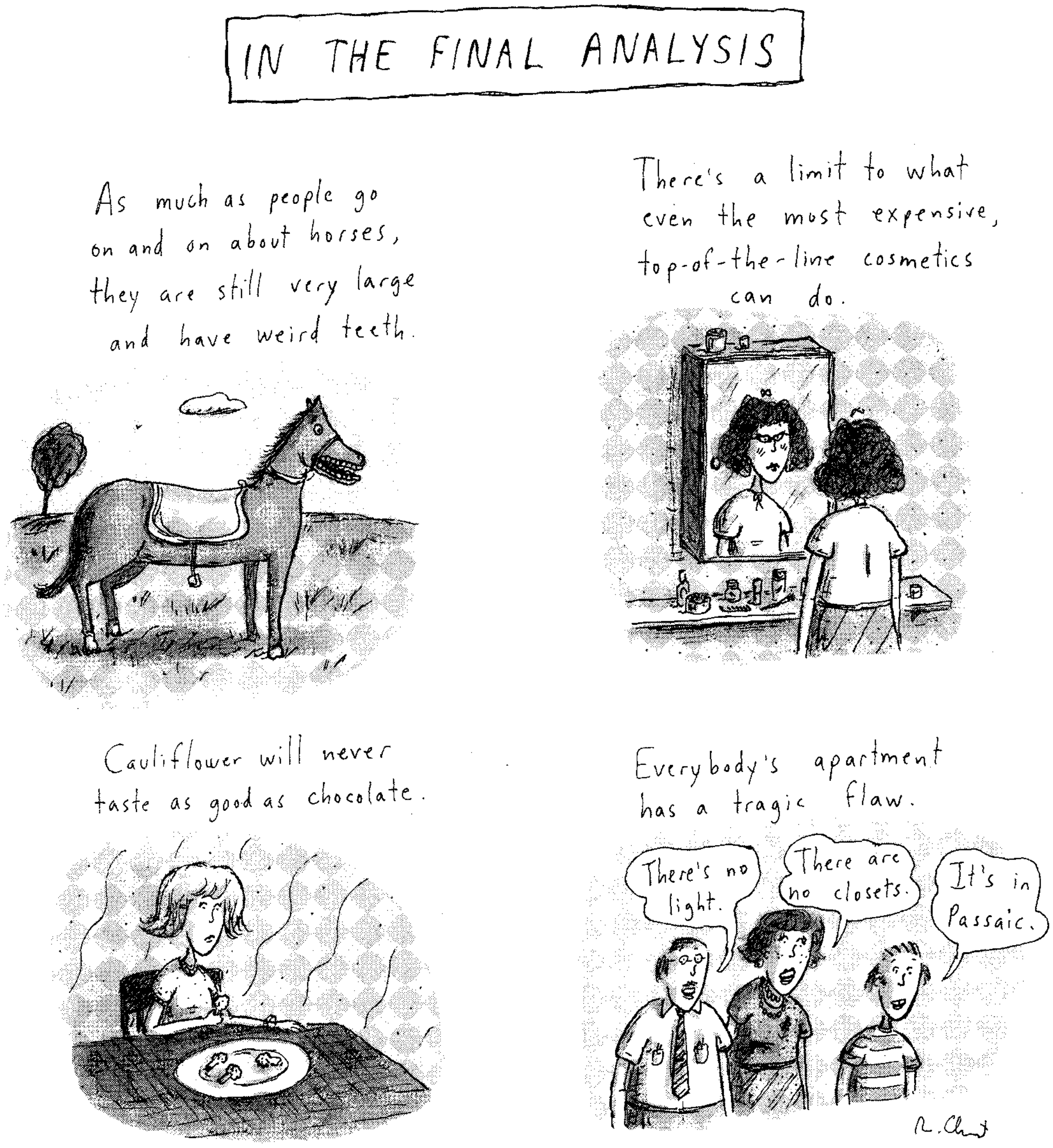
A moment later the door opened, and there was Sharon, his tall, willowy, successful (but dazed) older sister, in the arms of Vince, her vicious boyfriend, who was tugging on the shoulder strap of her blue jumper. "Beat it, scum," he snarled, and raised his fist to pound on Jim.

"Grrrrrrr," growled Tony, trying to leap up from under the covers, though he was much too weak.

Just as Jim was about to be pummelled by the loathsome Vince, Jim's dad, Jack, waltzed in. "Hi, kids," he said. “Hi, Tony. How’s tricks?” He smelled of a cilantro after-shave, and he looked youthful and tanned and taut and extremely fit. In fact, he appeared to be several years younger than either of his children. He smiled effortlessly. “Look what just came from my kiln!” he cried.

“What is that?” asked Sharon.

Jack grinned at her. “It’s a trivet,” he said.


IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS
As much as people go on and on about horses, they are still very large and have weird teeth.
There's a limit to what even the most expensive, top-of-the-line cosmetics can do.
Cauliflower will never taste as good as chocolate.
Everybody's apartment has a tragic flaw.
There's no light.
There are no closets.
It's in Passaic.

With literary costs rising each year, it becomes more and more difficult for writers to offer their stories to readers at a reasonable price. The 1989 Christmas Catalogue is one way you can help me keep on writing and not have to raise my rates. When you purchase one of these gifts, a portion of the price is earmarked for my writing program:

Colorful Tile Trivets. These handcrafted earth-tone tiles from Albuquerque are interesting additions to any kitchen counter. 6 x 6: $40 each.

Old-Time Holly Wreaths. A warm, traditional Christmas is yours with a supply of fragrant holly wreaths, sprays, and garlands from northern Wisconsin. One large crate: $164.

Juicy Oranges. Put a little sunshine in Christmas with a selection of Florida’s finest. One doz.: $15.

Shaker Love Seat. Handsomely fashioned from white birch. The classic simplicity of this heirloom piece will add distinctive charm to your home or office: $1,900.

“Tony’s dying, I think, of pneumonia,” said Jim.

“That’s too bad. We’ll get the best medical care available, regardless of cost,” said Jack. “I think Dr. Will is coming for dinner. Maybe he can save him. We met him at the Woffats’. He seemed nice.”

Downstairs, the bell rang—*bongggg, bongggg*. The door opened, and there were murmurs, and Alice yelled up the stairs, “Never mind. It’s only the wine man.”

Tony’s eyes were small and red, his nose was dry and scaly. His tongue was white. Jim stayed near the bed, wondering if even the vast, ill-gotten fortune of his parents could make the dog well. Tears ran down his cheeks.

Dr. Will arrived at eight—a dapper little fellow in a yellow bow tie, who seemed to diminish as he approached. “Jim, what a pleasure,” he said, easing onto the bed with a bland smile and surveying the old dog. “Alice asked me to check on Tony. How is he doing?”

“Near death.”

“Here. We’ll just have a look. Hmmmm. Let me just check his eyeballs. Nnnhnnn. Sort of red. Corneal infection, I’m afraid. But no prob, Bob. We’ll just do a corneal thing. Don’t worry.” He took out a pair of scissors and a hankie. “All we do is remove these old corneas and slip in a coupla new ones.”

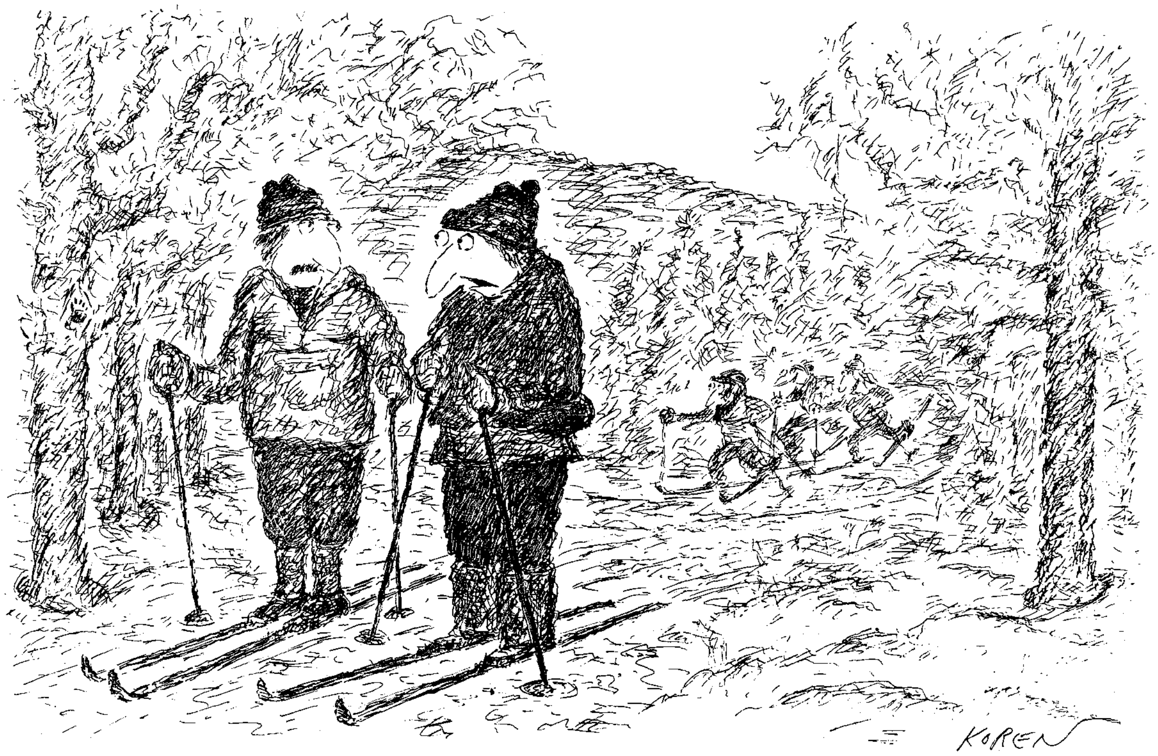
“No, please. No,” Jim said, and looked away in pain.

“It’ll bleed a lot for a while, but don’t worry. As long as he doesn’t blink, he won’t feel a darned thing.”

You’re lying, just trying to reassure me, thought Jim, and then he heard two little snips as his dog’s eyeballs were sliced. Tony moaned.

“That’s him, Jim,” said Dr. Will. “Now, where did I put the donor tissue? Did I leave it out in the car? Or—”

Have you ever thought you’d like to go on a winter cruise but not with thousands of owly seniors



"She always saw the glass as half empty, while I thought of it as half full. Now I see it as completely empty."

• •

grumping around the tropics? Join us for a cruise on the S.S. Nordstrom. Ten days sailing through the sparkling blue, sun-drenched Caribbean with people just like yourself: young, humorous, quietly attractive. Thoughtful people. Readers. Not John Jakes' readers or Danielle Steele's or Stephen King's. *My* readers. Such as you, for example. *My* kind of people. Starts at $4,500, double occupancy.

"WE'LL have Tony put in a special place for blind dogs," Mom said. "He'll be happier there than with you, hard as that is to accept. You'll go away to Yale soon, honey, and life will be good for both of you."

"You're lying. You're going to have him killed in a gas chamber!"

"I promise you that Tony will be sent to a training center where he will learn to work with a seeing-eye bird and lead a life that is almost normal. They use canaries that sit on the dog's shoulder and hold in their beak long reins attached to the dewlaps."

Jim looked down at his poor old pal; a bandage covered Tony's head except for his dry, brown nose and big, floppy ears and friendly mouth. A bandage very poorly wrapped, he couldn't help but notice. Tape slapped on, the way a post-office clerk would do it. Downstairs, Dr. Will was hobnobbing with the other celebrities over drinks. "Dinner is Afghani this year. Why don't you join us?" his mom said. But Jim couldn't leave Tony.

Or could he? Dinner sure sounded good to him, and maybe Mom was right; you can't live a dog's life for him, can you? A blindy like this one, he'd have to learn how to depend on himself and not expect favors. Lots of blind dogs nowadays just lie around getting fat and lazy probably. That's a rather poor attitude. Maybe he ought to leave Tony and go downstairs and talk to Dr. Will and the other influential guests, in hopes of garnering recommendations for future employment, graduate school, etc. Maybe he ought to kick Tony so as to make him less emotionally dependent.

IRISH FISHERMAN'S SWEATER. Woven by elderly island women from 100% rough-cut wool with natural oils intact, in the centuries-old "herring net" style, this handsome garment, with traditional shawl neck, is guaranteed to be absolutely distinctive, unlike anything your friends have seen. Specify size. Black or navy blue: $215.

ANTIQUE COPPER BATHTUB. This finely crafted copy of a nineteenth-century French tub, with filigreed edging, turtle-claw feet, and inscription on base, can be used for bathing, or to store firewood, or simply as a work of art. 52 x 28 x 36: $2,800.

ENAMEL BRIEFCASE. Handcrafted porcelain with 23k. gold handles, blue velvet lining, this beauty is patterned after those used by lawyers in Renaissance Antwerp, and its investment value is well proven: $18,500.

I'D just like to close with a big thank you to DioNate and wish a Merry Christmas to their forty thousand employees and express my sincere thanks to those who gave so generously to support my writing program and wish bon voyage to the folks on the Nordstrom and thank the customers of the Christmas Catalogue. Allow eight weeks for delivery. Tony, by the way, got a new pair of eyes, and Jim's family was pulled together by the crisis and learned the true meaning of Christmas, which is not how *much* but how *well*. It's a time for quality of life. Jim is headed for college, and Sharon split up with Vince, who was an illiterate brute, and—how can I say this?—she is marrying me on Wednesday morning. It was a whirlwind romance, and after a honeymoon on St. Bart's we'll be home in the sixteen-room Romanesque stone mansion Alice and Jack presented us with, which stands on the banks of a ten-thousand-acre marsh and wildlife preserve. A person could disappear in there and never be found again. But that's another story.

—GARRISON KEILLOR

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INFANT 6-12 mos. & three cases Similac w/iron, $25/each.—*Adv. in the Duluth (Minn.) News-Tribune.*

Is the kid still colicky?

A REPORTER AT LARGE

CHOICES

THE South African election on September 6th differed from an American one in several respects, and not only in that the blacks—the majority of the population—were disenfranchised. The election was announced just four months in advance, and campaigning became intense only in the final six weeks. It therefore bemused Americans on the scene to hear complaints about the length of the campaign, and demands by politicians and editorialists for "snap elections" in the future. Americans might also be impressed to learn that during the final weeks of the campaign public-opinion polls were prohibited and that throughout the entire campaign there was no political advertising on television and radio. Instead, there were posters, which were creative, amusing, barbed, and, like most advertising, often excessive. On some days, it seemed that every tree trunk and lamppost in South Africa—white South Africa, that is—was papered with a candidate's face or a witty slogan.

But perhaps the most striking aspect of the South African election, at least when looked at from the perspective of some past American ones, was that the parties were generally quite explicit on their positions and there was a clear choice for voters—a real difference between the parties. At one end of the political spectrum is the Conservative Party, which wants to preserve white rule in South Africa, where there are five million whites and nineteen million non-whites. "A government by white people for white people" is how the Conservative Party leader Andries Treurnicht, a sixty-eight-year-old former minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, who has been a member of Parliament since 1971, summarized the Party's policy in a speech in Durban during the campaign. The policy is to be achieved by "partition"—segregating whites in their part of the country, and coloreds (the formal classification of persons of mixed race), Indians, and blacks in theirs. The Conservatives don't hesitate to specify how they would enforce partition: by restoring the pass laws, which the government abolished in 1986, and strictly enforcing the Group Areas Act, passed in 1950, which determines on the basis of people's skin color where they can—and cannot—live.

At the other end of the white political spectrum is the Democratic Party, which was formed only a few months before the election. White observers, domestic and foreign, routinely labelled it "liberal," or even "leftist," but a prominent black leader here told me that if all South African political organizations were considered—those of the blacks, nearly all of which are banned, as well as those of the whites—the Democratic Party would probably be classified as centrist. There is nothing in the Democrats' platform that fits in the usual meaning of the terms "liberal" and "left"; for example, it is unequivocal in its commitment to free-market capitalism and its rejection of socialism. But in white South Africa to advocate greater rights for blacks is to be liberal, and by that definition the Democratic Party is liberal. During the campaign, the Party made it quite clear that it would scrap, among other things, the Group Areas Act; the Separate Amenities Act, of 1953, which keeps blacks and whites from sharing beaches, hospitals, sports stadiums, city halls, and other public facilities; and the Population Registration Act, of 1950, popularly known as the race-classification act, which is the foundation of apartheid, since it requires that at birth every child be given a race classification.

Between the Conservatives and the Democrats stand the Nats—the members of the National Party, which is the party that invented apartheid and, during forty-one years of uninterrupted rule, has refined, revised, and enforced it. In campaign speeches, however, the Nat leader, F. W. de Klerk, was emphatic about the need for "reform" and "drastic changes," and went as far as to call for "an end to white domination" and for "power sharing" with blacks. A limited power-sharing arrangement was begun in 1984, when the country's three million coloreds and roughly a million Indians were given separate chambers of Parliament. These chambers have virtually no power except over a few matters pertaining exclusively to their separate groups, and the September 6th elections for them were widely boycotted: less than twenty per cent of the registered colored and Indian electorate voted.

The National Party's election theme was a "new" South Africa, but the Party was vague about what that new South Africa would look like, what reforms it might encompass, and how the power sharing would be arranged. While both the Conservatives and the Democrats were unequivocal about Group Areas, Separate Amenities, and Population Registration, for example, the Nationalists came down in the muddled middle. In speeches and in answer to questions from voters, de Klerk often said that the Nationalists were "not married" to these laws, but he would not commit his government to repealing them outright; rather, he said that they would be amended or modified—in ways he did not specify. The equivocation in the National Party's policy is reflected in its approach to the Separate Amenities Act. The law is widely unenforced, and South Africa—particularly its larger metropolitan areas—doesn't appear to be appreciably more segregated than the United States. Downtown Johannesburg could be mistaken for Detroit. Even in Johannesburg's wealthy suburbs, one sees blacks playing soccer in well-maintained parks; true, the blacks don't live in any of the sprawling houses nearby, but how many of America's wealthiest suburbs are in fact integrated? The critical difference between the realities of discrimination in the two countries is that in the United States such segregation is de facto but in South Africa it is very much de jure. Indeed, after the Conservatives, in October of 1988, gained control of the municipal government in Boksburg, a town of eighty-seven thousand whites fifteen miles southeast of Johannesburg, they began rigorously enforcing the Separate Amenities Act, erecting "Whites Only" signs and keeping blacks out of parks, swimming pools, the town hall, and other public facilities. The blacks responded with a boycott, which severely damaged white businesses. During the campaign, the Nats thundered at the Conservatives about Boksburg, turning the name of the town into shorthand for what would happen if the Conservatives were to run the national government. Yet in Boksburg the Conservatives were merely enforcing the National Party law.

The National Party platform declared that "discrimination between groups or against individuals based on race, colour, sex, religion, or group affiliation is unacceptable." It also said, however, that every individual and every group "must have the freedom to choose a communal lifestyle," and that each has the right to its "own community life, own residential areas, and own schools." These two provisions reveal the essence of National Party policy: the government might not enact discriminatory laws, but it will enforce private discrimination. Thus, if whites, exercising their "freedom to choose," prefer to live in a neighborhood from which blacks are excluded, or to send their children to whites-only schools, they will be legally permitted to do so.

A photograph in the Johannesburg *Star,* which, like most of the country's other English-language newspapers, endorsed the Democratic Party, showed a poster of a Nationalist candidate beneath a street sign telling drivers that they could turn either way. "Indicative of Nat policy," the photo caption said. While the Nats' platform, in its haziness, was easy to make jokes about, it did reflect certain white South African political realities. One is that a range of political views is represented within the National Party itself. Some leaders of the Party are referred to as *verligte,* an Afrikaans word meaning "enlightened," and others are called *verkrampte*—ultra-conservative, or hard-line. And if the Party's positions seem confused and uncertain they may reflect how the majority of the white South Africans feel. Most whites don't agree with the Conservative policy, which is a return to the rigid apartheid of the past. They know that there must be change, not because of any moral imperative but because of economic and demographic realities: by the year 2000, whites will make up about ten per cent of the population. But most whites don't want to go as far as the Democrats' platform does—especially the Democratic plank advocating one man, one vote.

To gain some understanding of the attitudes of Conservative Party supporters, I went to the town of Zeerust, in the northwestern part of the country. The town is surrounded by pieces of Bophuthatswana, one of the so-called homelands that were created by the South African whites as part of the grand design to keep blacks in their own places. There are six thousand whites and six thousand blacks in Zeerust. The blacks live a mile or so from the center of town, in a township of dirt streets, shacks, communal water taps, and towering poles with powerful spotlights, which the authorities can turn on in case of trouble. Zeerust also has eight hundred coloreds and three hundred Indians, who live in their designated area. In the last election, in 1987, the Conservative Party candidate for the district that includes Zeerust defeated his National Party opponent by 7,595 votes to 5,005. South Africa has some three million white voters, and the average size of a constituency is twenty thousand. The September 6th white election was for a hundred and sixty-six seats in the national House of Assembly; the party that has a majority can name its leader State President.

In the view of the Conservative Party, which was formed in 1982 by dissident Nats who objected to their Party's proposal for "power sharing" through the separate Indian and colored chambers of Parliament, the National Party is just as evil as

"Mark, how fabulous. I don't have a smoke alarm."

the Democratic Party, and just as likely to turn the country over to the African National Congress, or A.N.C.—the oldest and most prominent black organization in South Africa, which has been banned since 1960. "AFTER NP ACTION, ANC SATISFACTION," one Conservative poster in Zeerust read, referring to the Nats' Plan of Action, its election manifesto. Another poster declared:

NP: BLACK GOVERNMENT
CP: SELF GOVERNMENT.

FUN CITY UPDATE
TUNNEL OF TRAFFIC
ADMISSION
$2.50
EXACT CHANGE
MANKOFF

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I saw these posters as I drove into Zeerust on a Saturday morning, along with John Battersby, of the *Christian Science Monitor*, a South African who speaks Afrikaans. We had no specific destination, so we stopped at the Magistrate's Building, a one-story structure with arches and a clock tower built in 1910—the year that the two former Boer republics, the Orange Free State and the Transvaal, joined with the two British colonies, the Cape and Natal, to form the Union of South Africa. White South Africans still tend to see themselves as either Afrikaner or English-speaking; the term "English-speaking" is used, even though most white South Africans are bilingual, and Afrikaans and English are both official languages. The National Party has traditionally been the party of the Afrikaners, who constitute about sixty per cent of the white population; the English-speaking whites have remained out of politics or have supported opposition parties, which have gone by a number of names but have never had any real power. Today, the base of the Conservative Party's support is among rural Afrikaners, in places like Zeerust, and among urban blue-collar workers, who feel economically threatened by black empowerment.

In front of the Zeerust Magistrate's Building was a table with Conservative Party posters and literature. On the sidewalk stood a group of men and women talking casually. They were there to assist voters, who, under the law, could cast their ballot as early as a month before the election merely by declaring that they would not be present in the district on voting day. (In some districts, more than half of the votes were cast ahead of time.) One of them was Jan Steyn.

As Battersby and I chatted with the group, Steyn asked, "Do you know why I like to watch 'Dallas'? Do you know why?" He laughed, giving the question the air of a riddle. I couldn't imagine the answer. "There are no blacks on 'Dallas,' " he said. Steyn, a father of four, said that he planned to vote Conservative. "Our school is going down," he said. "Our town is going down." He complained that this was because "the best land" was being given to the blacks for the homeland of Bophuthatswana, so there were now fewer farmers in the area and fewer children in the schools. Land is, of course, being given to the blacks—if they are expected to live apart from whites, they have to have somewhere to live—but what they get is hardly the best land. In any event, the land question seemed to worry Steyn less than the question of intermarriage. "When you get married, you want to marry a white woman," he said. "If intermarriage is allowed, you've got colored people." He mentioned the Spanish in Latin America. "They went there to colonize, but they married the local people," he said. "Today, there is no Spanish identity or culture in Latin America. There is nothing left of the white, colonial people." In the United States, it was just as bad, he went on, arguing that the Greeks and the Italians had lost their identity, because they didn't have their own areas and their own elected representatives.

As we talked, a cream-colored Mercedes pulled up at the curb, and a distinguished-looking man in gray slacks, a white shirt, and a deep-green sports coat got out. "M. S. F. Grobler," he said when I asked his name. He was eighty-four years old, with gray hair and thick gray eyebrows. Grobler had been a member of Parliament from 1958 to 1977. "We had a right-wing government, and we belonged to the right wing," he explained. Grobler, who was one of the founders of the Conservative Party in 1982, said he felt that the blacks weren’t ready to rule the country, because they weren’t “civilized.” He went on to say, “The blacks—we found them in their huts, without clothes. There are millions in the Transkei”—one of the black homelands—“and all over, still living as they did a hundred years ago. They’re not up to our stage. That’s the main thing. And they won’t be for a hundred years. We must meet them at their stage of development and help uplift them.” He told us that when he was much younger, long before he went into politics, he had been a lay missionary in the Dutch Reformed Church—“the pioneer missionary in the Transkei,” he said proudly—and that he knew seven black languages. To convince us that his affection for the black man was genuine, he said that when he was a missionary he had been called *tandabantu*—the man who loves the black people. “I know the black men,” he said again. “I don’t hate them. But I don’t want them in my house. I don’t want my daughter to marry one. I don’t want them to rule my country.”

IN A RAINY COUNTRY

It was already the landscape of the past,
streaked with illusionary colors,
all of it displaced, tilted at a crazy angle,
blazing with the rare sunlight of a rainy country,
all of it impossible, though it was only the place
where you had lived for too many years—

all of it *below*, *behind*,
the tamed river curling out of the burnt, blue hills
crossed by the massive red arches of a viaduct
(and none of it to be seen again, except through fog),
the city bristling and blurring as it sank away,
knowing it had failed like Ephesus,
a port the great ships no longer visited, a place to leave.

The world was an aureole
surrounding a small, sealed window,
and you turned from the glass astonished and in tears
at the start of a new trajectory,
the departure into new hopes and fears:
the embrace of clouds waited up ahead.

The air was so sweet
on your arrival it was as if
the trees in the park blossomed, although the year was ending,
ending in glory. You had crossed the ocean. Now

• •

“What everybody thinks is that we want to get rid of the blacks completely,” Steyn said. “But we don’t want to get rid of them. We just don’t want them to rule us. I can ask you this question. What happened to your Indians? Why are they not ruling in your government? Why are the Americans fighting Jesse Jackson?”

At the core of the attitudes of men like Steyn and Grobler, and of Conservative Party policy, is the desire to preserve what they see as the purity of Afrikanerdom. “We are Afrikaners,” Steyn said. “We developed over three hundred years. We developed our own language, our own religion, our own culture.”

Grobler asked, “Why do you say Afrikaners are expendable? The Jews aren’t expendable. The Palestinians aren’t expendable. Why are we? Afrikaners cannot survive in the long term as a minority.”

Across the street was a small park, past which runs Zeerust’s major commercial street. On this Saturday morning, the street was filled with shoppers, almost all of them black. Until the Conservatives won control of the local government in elections in 1987, the blacks would go into the park and sit in the shade of the palm trees when they finished their shopping. “It was a mess,” Steyn recalled. To keep the blacks out of the park, the Zeerust municipal government didn’t put up “WHITES ONLY” signs; it closed the park. A low wire fence now surrounds it. “If you want to feel proud of your park, you must close it,” he explained. “Then nobody can use it.”

Grobler, pointing to the nearest corner, where there were three small concrete tables under a shade tree, said, “We’ve got a little place for them under the trees there. Before we closed the park, it would be full of blacks, lying around, sleeping. The people are not civilized enough to do what the Democratic Party and you Americans think.”

ON the edge of town, at the Abjaterskop, a single-story motel, two young businessmen sitting at the bar had a radically different view of South Africa’s majority. “Black or white—as far as I’m concerned, they’re human beings,” Jan de Klerk, a thirty-one-year-old insurance broker, said. “If my friend here is black, he’s still my friend. It’s personality that counts. Integrity.” His friend, who was not black, was Ben Zietsman, thirty-three, a personnel director for a South African company. Black rule was “inevitable” within five years, Zietsman said—a rate faster than most black leaders or white liberals believe is possible—and the prospect didn’t bother him. He could vote for a black for President, he said. De Klerk and Zietsman lived in Lichtenburg, which is fifty miles south of Zeerust and just as conservative. Both men said that their parents supported the Conservatives but that they themselves intended to vote for the Nationalists. They agreed, however, that if there were a Democratic candidate in their district they would vote for him.

With that, a young man sitting on my other side joined the conversation. “How can anybody vote Democratic?” he said, in a tone somewhere between incredulity and horror. He introduced himself as Sidney Meintjes, and said he was thirty years old and worked as a maintenance man in government buildings. He has four black men working for him, and each of them earns sixty-five rand, or twenty-five dollars, a week. “Those blacks work-

you stepped from the avenue into the rotunda
and smiled toward the statue of a woman. Wine was poured
at the top of the curving stairs and the mirrors
were filled with the faces of those who justified
all your waiting, messengers from another life.
Each one arrived with a nimbus, each smile sang
of an understanding that would last beyond the framing curtains
of this night.

There would be multiplications and extensions,
polyphonic variations on the deathless theme, which now
you held in your hand like a brilliant maple leaf
salvaged from the ruin of a noble valley.

So if the cold abraded your ears,
or if your coattails blew about in the merciless
wind of Seventh Avenue, it did not matter;
you were on your way to purchase music or help love prosper.

What is left behind is irretrievable,
but continues like a melody whose logical and grieving progression nothing
can halt.

Impossible not to think of it now—
the horror that fell on my father like a wolf and nearly tore him out of life.
And mother? Mother suffers more quietly,
a weeping scale on a piano, and the piano distant.

—John Ash

• •

ing for me, I love them, they're like my brothers," he said. A few minutes later, he said, "I work every day with the bloody kaffir, and they're bloody stupid. They can never rule a country." How would he feel about an educated black man, say a doctor or a lawyer, we asked. "A black man, if he's civilized and clean, can sit where you are and have a beer," he answered. Then he added, "But you don't know the stink. A black man is like a baboon." Meintjes complained that whites paid most of the taxes in South Africa. He said that he earned two hundred and fifty rand a week and paid seventy-four rand a month in taxes, while a black supervisor he worked with earned twenty rand a week less and paid no taxes. "That kaffir pays no tax," he repeated, and he went on, "That's why the white man in South Africa is against the black man. Because they don't pay taxes." He was echoing a familiar complaint—one that we had heard from other white South Africans and one I had heard the Conservative leader, Andries Treurnicht, make in a speech in Durban. It is true that non-whites pay only about twenty per cent of the country's income taxes (and that Meintjes' colleague, at two hundred and thirty rand a week, because of his marital status and dependents, would not pay any income tax). It is also true that the disparity in taxes paid by blacks and whites reflects the fact that blacks earn substantially less than whites, and true that the government spends substantially more—certainly per capita, if not in gross amount—on services for whites than on services for blacks.

While we were engaged in these political discussions at the bar, under the gaze of mounted buffalo and impala heads, we were served by a young woman with long, teased blond hair and mauve eyeshadow. She was sixteen years old and her name was Marriette Breytenbach. Her father, Friedrich, owns the hotel. I asked her what she thought of Zeerust.

"I just hate Zeerust," she said. She told us that she longed for the good life, in Johannesburg. So when she mentioned that there would be a disco dance in Zeerust that night we asked if she would like to go. "No," she said. "There will be blacks." She went on, "I have nothing against blacks, but I don't want to mix with them. I don't want to go to church with them. I don't want to go to school with them."

I asked if a wealthy black—an educated man, perhaps a lawyer—could stay in the hotel.

"No," she said. There were four rooms separate from the hotel for blacks, she explained, adding, "I think it's fair."

Later, a black man did come into the hotel asking for a room. Marriette sought out her father, and he treated the man respectfully and gave him a key to Room B, one of the four rooms set aside for blacks, in a red brick building a hundred yards away from the main hotel. He told me later that if he gave rooms in the hotel to blacks it would hurt his business.

Friedrich Breytenbach is a powerfully built man of forty-two with a thick, trimmed black beard. He is a farmer, a builder, a businessman, and a politician; in last year's local elections, he ran for the municipal council on the Conservative line and was the top vote-getter. "In my heart, I believe in segregation," he told me. "I don't want to be ruled by the blacks. And I don't think they want to be ruled by us." Though Breytenbach favors partition, he said he realized that you couldn't have it on a national basis—that a city like Johannesburg had to be integrated. "Where I disagree with the Democratic Party is that if I had a choice I wouldn't stay in an integrated society," he said. "I'd stay with my own people." But if black majority rule does come, he said, he will stay in South Africa.

Breytenbach struck me as different from other Conservative Party supporters I met in Zeerust. Never, during a conversation that began at the bar, went on through dinner, and finished the next morning, did he seek to defend his position by saying "I don't hate blacks" or by professing to love them. Nor did he ever speak of them in derogatory terms. In fact, he spoke with genuine fondness and respect about a man he called Pete, who was the head of the black township council. Pete had recently asked Breytenbach to present the township's proposal for a sewerage system to a higher government body. "I feel very honored," Breytenbach told me.

What Breytenbach wants is a white homeland, "where whites are a majority, where you can have an undisputed right to say, 'This is my place.' " It would be like Israel, he said. "The

Jews live all over the world, but they know that it is their homeland. That is the only thing I want—that there is my homeland, where I will be completely safe."

When it comes to dividing up the country, to giving the whites their homeland, I asked, who gets the gold mines, the fertile land, the beaches?

Breytenbach again referred to Israel. "It's not a very rich country, but all the wealthy Jews all over the world are willing to contribute," he said. In other words, he would be willing to accept a homeland that did not have all the nation's riches. In this respect, he is clearly different from most Conservative white South Africans: the part of South Africa they want for themselves is the territory with the wealth and the good climate.

IN the campaign, the National Party was less anxious about its right flank than about its left, for a number of reasons. One was that the Nats saw the support for the Conservatives as solid, and felt that attracting Conservative voters would require promises that they were not willing to make; the National Party was "mindful that there should be life after September 6th," as one of its leaders put it, meaning that its ability to make the limited changes in the racial laws which it was willing to make, and to conduct negotiations with black leaders, would be circumscribed if the Party made concessions to Conservative voters. At the same time, the Nationalists concluded—probably correctly—that support for the Democratic Party was much more precarious and they could successfully court potential Democratic voters by presenting a moderate image, which they did.

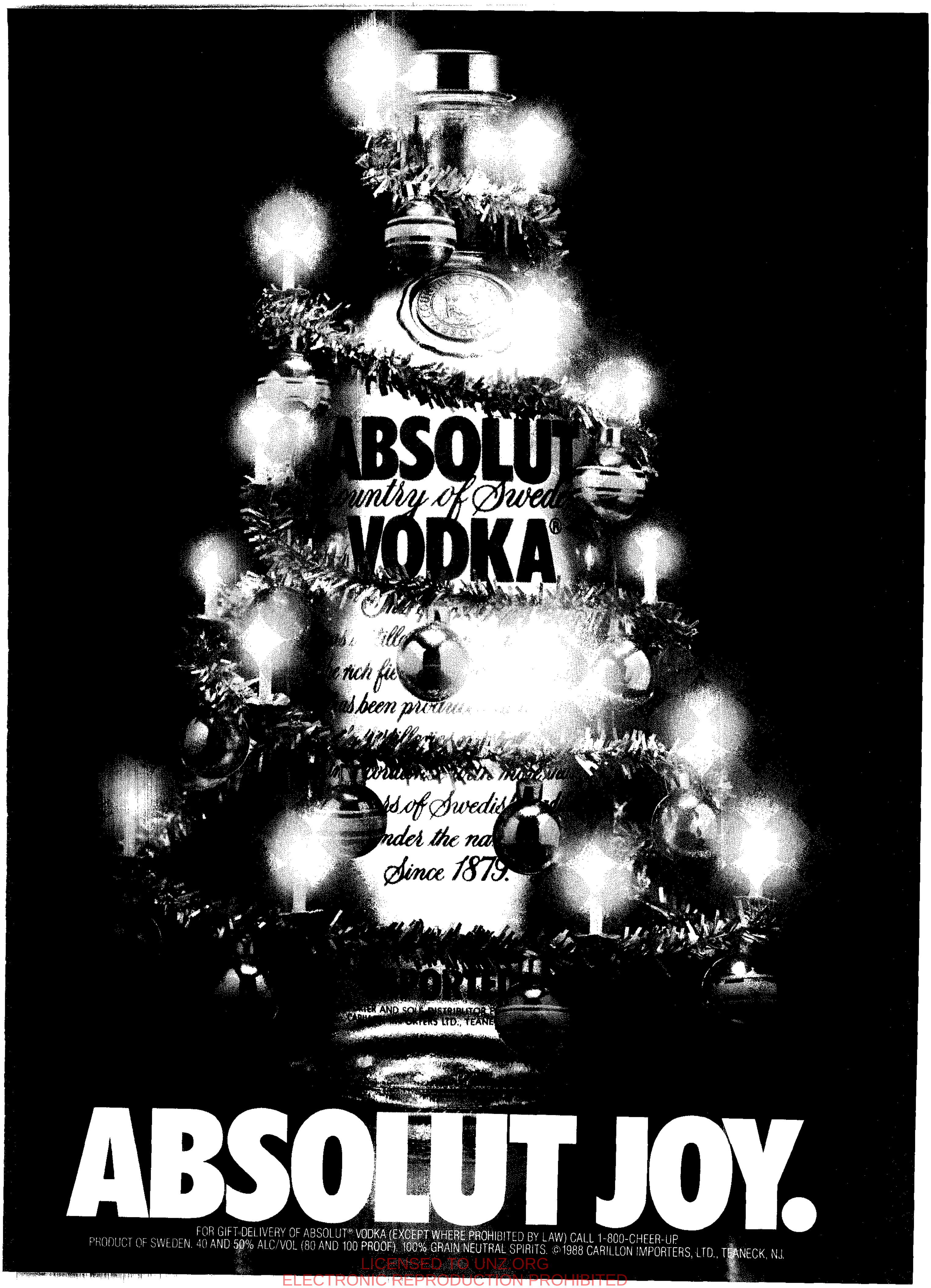
The Democratic Party is a reluctant union of two tiny parties and the Progressive Federal Party, whose most notable member was Helen Suzman. Mrs. Suzman retired this year after thirty-six years in Parliament, where for long stretches hers was the lone voice raised against apartheid. Before the election, I called on Mrs. Suzman at her spacious home in Hyde Park, on the outskirts of Johannesburg, and asked why she had decided not to run again. "Listen, dearie, I'm seventy-one and will be seventy-two soon after the election," she said. "It's time for younger people to take over. I have had good innings. It's nice to go when people want you to stay." She concluded, "I don't have the same attachment—the same sentimental attachment, the same strong ties—to the Democratic Party as to the Progressive Federal Party." The careful phrasing of this last thought unquestionably veiled some bitterness about the disappearance of the Progressive Party, which she had helped to found, in 1959—it later became the Progressive Federal Party—and had held together. With the same grace, however, she acknowledged that the Democratic Party had broader appeal than the Progressive Federal Party—"presumably because we weren't Afrikaans enough and were too élitist." The P.F.P.'s strength was in the urban areas, particularly in the wealthy northern suburbs of Johannesburg, with tree-lined boulevards, large houses, and private tennis courts.

WmHamilton

"Guess what. You're all Early American furniture maniacs."

Unable to overcome strong egos and ambitions, and perhaps uncertain about the exact direction the Party should take, the Democrats selected not one leader but three: Zach de Beer, Wynand Malan, and Denis Worrall. Dr. de Beer—he has a medical degree, but most of his career was in business—was a member of Parliament in the nineteen-fifties and again in the nineteen-seventies. From 1972 to 1988, he was an executive with Anglo American, the multinational mining company that dominates the South African economy. Last year, he left the company when he became the head of the Progressive Federal Party—the position he held at the time of its merger. Malan and Worrall were both renegades from the National Party, as were seventeen other Democratic candidates—men and women who left the Nats because they felt the Party was changing too slowly.

The most conservative of the three Democratic leaders is Denis Worrall, who only a few years ago, as a National Party M.P., had been an advocate of the separate chambers of Parliament for coloreds and Indians. He was serving as Ambassador to London when he quit the National Party, and returned to run for Parliament against a very popular, and liberal, Nationalist candidate. Worrall lost by only thirty-nine votes out of eighteen thousand cast. There is no requirement that a person live in the district from which he or she is a candidate, and this time Worrall ran for a safe seat—in a wealthy suburb of Durban which is predominantly English-speaking. He won by a wide margin. Worrall, whose



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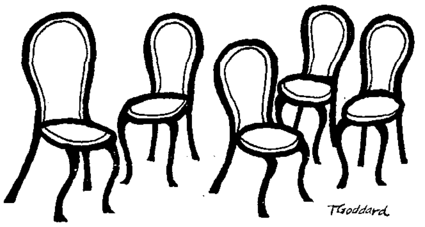
blond hair makes him look younger than his fifty-four years, was the Party's most dynamic speaker, and its most active; he told one audience that he was making his tenth speech in two days. While Worrall is probably the most popular of the three leaders among the Democratic voters, he is viewed with suspicion by many Party leaders, who are uneasy about his ambitions, noting that the Democratic is the fifth political party of which Worrall has been an active member.

Malan, who is forty-six, had been a National M.P. since 1977, and his defection, in January of 1987, was a particularly devastating blow to the Nats because he is from a prominent Afrikaner family. His heritage and the fact that he is the most liberal of the Democratic leaders—among them, he has been open and aggressive in his contacts with the A.N.C. and other anti-apartheid organizations that were either in exile or banned—made him a target of the National Party. To run for Parliament against Malan, in an upper-middle-class professional suburb of Johannesburg, the Nats put up a career diplomat, Glenn Babb, who tried to convey a progressive attitude. Babb's campaign was well financed and well run. The Malan-Babb race was one of the most closely watched races, with some observers saying that it was too close to predict. Malan won, 8,481 to 6,767.

The National Party made an issue of the Democrats' having three leaders. One ubiquitous National Party poster portrayed the leaders as the Three Blind Mice, with the caption "Who's the Boss?" At a political meeting in Benoni, an industrial city east of Johannesburg, Roelef F. (Pik) Botha, South Africa's Foreign Minister and probably the most popular Nationalist, entertained the audience with an attack on the Democrats' leadership. "Never in the history of this country have you had a party with three leaders," he said. "Never in the history of most other countries have you had three kings on the throne. . . . The reason why they can't agree on one leader is quite clear: they represent three parties, who have gotten together in order to exploit the dissatisfaction in South Africa today." That dissatisfaction, he acknowledged, was mostly economic. The audience applauded in agreement, and Botha went on, "But watch when thieves fall out." He paused, grinned, and added, "I don't mean they are thieves." Then he took on the Democratic leaders one by one. "It is quite well known that Wynand Malan is a socialist," Botha said. (However liberal he may be, Malan is not a socialist.) Socialism was "absolutely anathema" to Progressive Federal Party thinking, Botha said, now conveniently identifying his own party with its longtime nemesis. Of Worrall, who has a doctorate in political science from Cornell University, Botha said, "Dr. Worrall, he worked for me. I appointed him Ambassador to Australia." That was in 1983. The next year, Botha appointed Worrall Ambassador to London. Then, one day in January of 1987, Botha told the audience, his wife brought him the newspaper, and that was how he learned that one of his ambassadors was quitting his post and the National Party to fight against the government. "That, ladies and gentlemen, was my reward . . . for my loyalty and commitment. Judge for yourself. Judge for yourself. . . . In two to three years' time, Dr. Worrall will say what nonsense he propagated in 1989." Of the third Democratic leader Botha said, "In a way, I feel sorry for Zach de Beer." He explained that he had recently seen de Beer at a luncheon, and de Beer had looked worried. "I thought, If I had a Worrall, I'd worry."

THE Democratic Party may have troubled the Nationalists in part precisely because with three leaders representing a range of views it offered many white South African voters something they had never had before. "Since I've been eighteen, every election I've spoiled my paper—except one," Lorna Bannatyne said. "I've never had an option I believed in. I've never had someone I wanted to vote for. I don't believe in apartheid, or discrimination of any sort." We were sitting in the lobby of the Boulevard Hotel in Witbank, in the eastern Transvaal, at a meeting of the local Democratic Party which was to feature a speech by Denis Worrall. Mrs. Bannatyne, who is thirty-five years old and the mother of three young boys, not only planned to vote for the Democrats but was working for the Party as well; it was her first foray into politics.



The Democrats didn't expect to win in Witbank, a town of forty-five thousand whites and fifty thousand blacks sixty miles east of Pretoria, on the freeway to Kruger National Park. Situated in the center of South Africa's coal-producing and power-generating region, Witbank is very conservative, its white population predominantly Afrikaner. During the campaign, a colored engineer working for Cyanamid, an American-owned company, was forced to leave a house on company-owned property because it was in a whites-only area; and two black engineering students working for an Anglo American subsidiary were evicted from a three-story brick dormitory where they were living, also in violation of the Group Areas Act. Witbank's M.P., a Conservative, claimed credit for having the students removed.

The Witbank chapter of the Democratic Party was formed in May, when eighteen people gathered at the house of Charles Vincent, a thirty-eight-year-old pharmacist. "I've always been left of the government," Vincent told me. The new Witbank chapter asked Hermann (Koos) Venter to be its candidate. Venter, a slightly built, mild-mannered man of forty-two, was a political novice. His campaign literature listed his civic involvements—with the Evergreen Old Age Home, the Highveld Cripple Care Committee, and the Coalfields Rotary Club. He is an electrical contractor, and one Saturday in August he had to put off campaigning in order to install an alarm system in a chicken hatchery.

"I was brought up very, very conservative—I've never been out of this country," Venter, an Afrikaner, said as we talked at the Boulevard, where the meeting gave area residents an opportunity to meet the Democratic candidates. "I went to a very conservative school. I voted for the National Party —that's one of the first things you're taught when you're eighteen." He went on, "I changed my political opinions by being a member of the Dutch Reformed Church. There was an incident, somewhere out in the country, where blacks wanted to attend a funeral." It was in 1973 or 1974, he said, and black farmworkers wanted to at-

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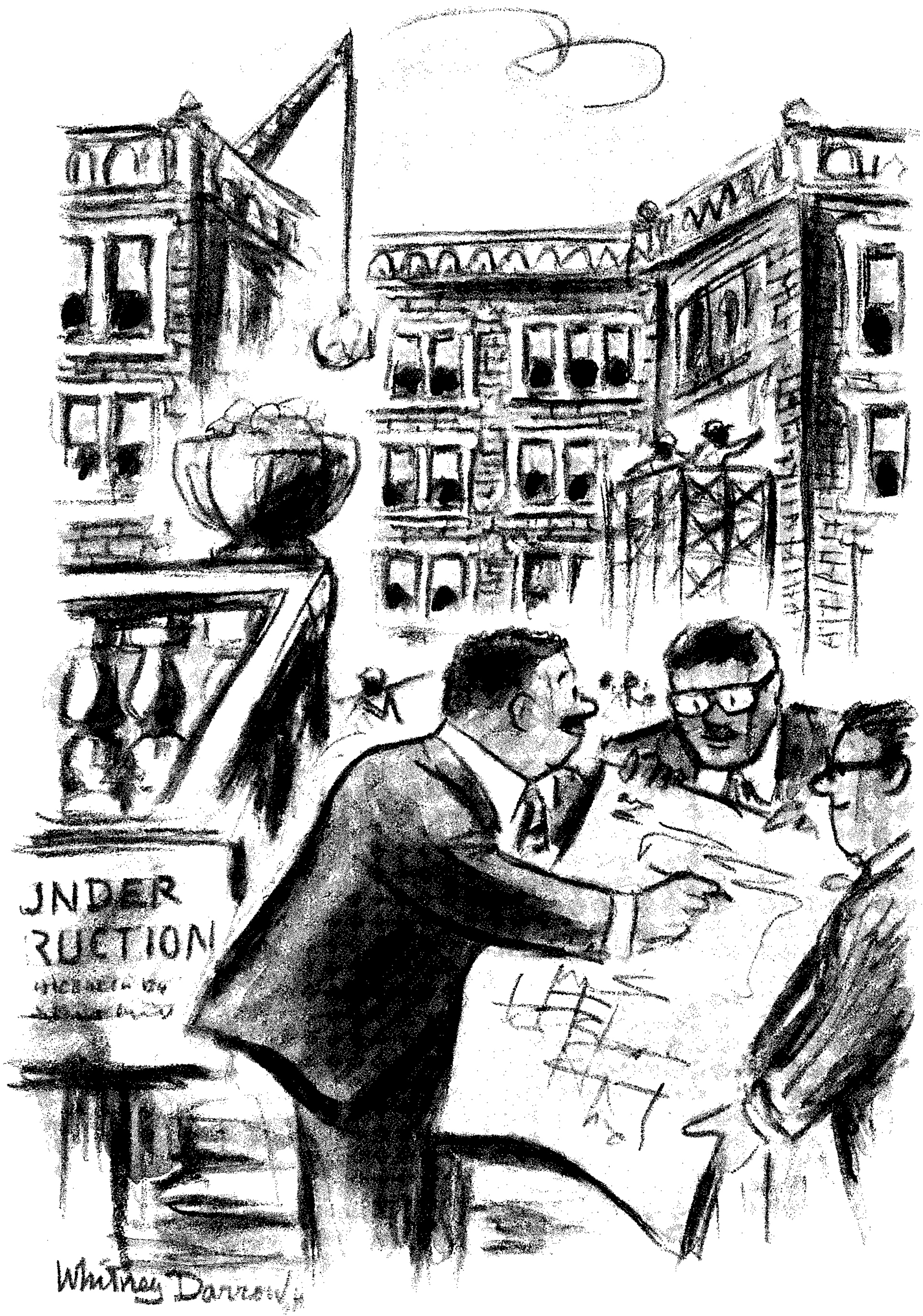

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tend the funeral of their boss. The church forbade the blacks to attend the church service, Venter said, but allowed them to go to the grave site. "I said to my wife, 'This is no good.' " He started going to the Methodist Church.

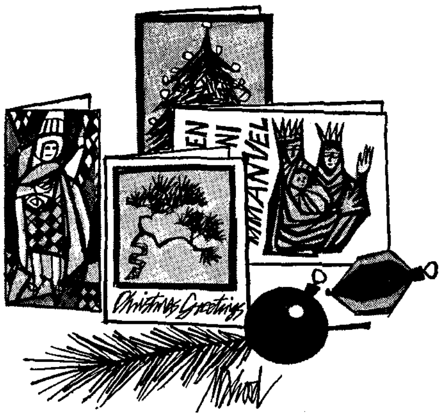
Venter, who is the father of three girls, told a story to illustrate why, "from a conscience point of view, a moral point of view," he believed that the National Party government was the wrong one for the country. One of his daughters is twelve years old and attends a public school, he said; the previous week, she had come home and told him and his wife about a lesson she had been given that day in how to address people. The children were taught that if the person was white and older, he or she should always be addressed as Mr. or Mrs. If the person was black, the first name was proper, unless the person was educated and well dressed; in that case the form of address should be Mr. or Mrs.

I asked Venter why he was running, since he presumably had no chance to win. "Because I believe in what the Democratic Party stands for," he said. "The only solution is getting rid of apartheid, not just reforming apartheid. Reformed apartheid is still apartheid." (On election day, Venter received 949 votes out of 18,023 cast, and the Conservative M.P. was reëlected.)

The hotel conference room was just about filled, with some three hundred people—a turnout that impressed the organizers and the candidates, especially since it was a Friday evening. There were a few Indians, coloreds, and blacks in the audience, and they were immediately noticed, because it was rare for a campaign audience to be anything but all white. Their presence was a testimonial to the Democrats' commitment to being a multiracial party. One reason the meeting was held in the Boulevard was that it is one of the few places in Witbank that will accept all races. A few weeks later, F. W. de Klerk spoke at the town hall in Witbank, which only whites were permitted to enter. "Afrikaans yuppies and older speaking-English people" was how Lorna Bannatyne described the audience for the Democratic evening. I sat next to an elderly man named L. James Thorne, who had been a mining engineer with the gold division of Anglo American from 1940 until 1976, when he retired. He was full of enthusiasm for the Democratic Party. In the past, he had always voted Nationalist, "as the lesser of the two evils," he told me. "Now that the Democratic Party is around, it's like a breath of fresh air to be able to vote for someone you believe in. I won't have to vote my second choice anymore."

The meeting opened with a prayer. "As we prepare for a general election, we remember those who are denied the privilege we have," the minister said. "Forgive us, we pray." The first speaker was Brian Kane-Berman, a thirty-nine-year-old Democratic candidate from Middelburg, which is eighteen miles northeast of Witbank. He is another citizen politician—a farmer, who had never even voted, because he didn't agree with apartheid. Kane-Berman didn't decide to become a candidate until six weeks before the election, and since Middelburg was even more conservative than Witbank his chances of victory were nonexistent. On election day, he received 609 votes out of 18,095; the Conservative candidate won with just over ten thousand. When I asked Kane-Berman why he was running, he replied, "To get a message across—a message to the rest of the world, to black South Africa. If I didn't stand, there is definitely no message. Now we can say there are people who care."

The day after the meeting, I went canvassing with Lorna Bannatyne and Helene Griffiths, who is also thirty-five years old and the mother of three children. Another newcomer to politics, she remarked that her children had summed up the election this way: "The Conservative Party doesn't like the blacks and wants to keep them separate. The Nats say they're O.K., but don't want them next door. The Democrats want them next door." We went to a well-to-do residential neighborhood—wide streets with ranch-style houses, neat lawns, and two-car garages. At one house, with a BMW and a Land Rover in the driveway, a woman who looked to be about thirty said that she and her husband had been talking the other night about how difficult it was to decide whom to vote for this year. In the past, they had voted Nationalist, but now the economy was so bad. They didn't like the Conservative Party, because of its actions in Boksburg. Mrs. Bannatyne said to the woman, who was a real-estate agent, that it was the laws enacted by the Nationalist Party government that permitted the Conservative Party to do what it had done in Boksburg. I heard this argument made frequently by Democratic candidates and supporters, but I'm not sure how much impact it had; it didn't seem to impress the woman in Witbank. A lot of white South Africans want to maintain the laws segregating public facilities and living areas, it seems; they just don't want them enforced as heavy-handedly as the Conservatives did in Boksburg.



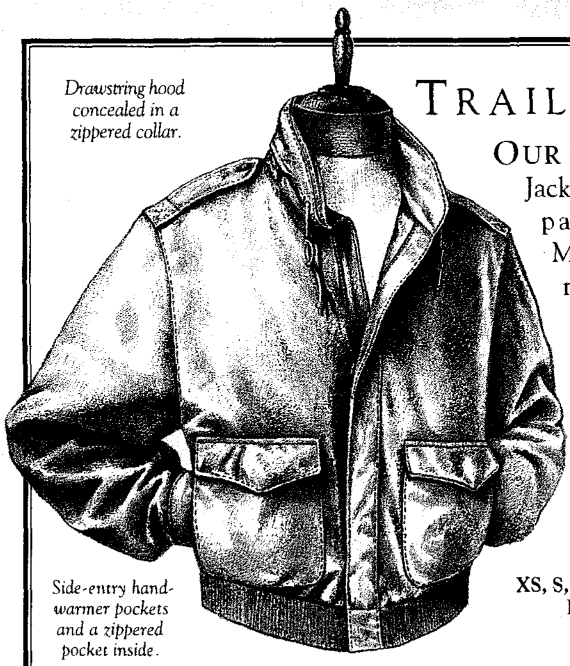
The real-estate agent, an Afrikaner, said that she was just as uncomfortable with the Democratic Party. Its policies, she said, would lead to a black Parliament and, within five years, a black President. Answering a question from Lorna Bannatyne, she said that she wouldn't mind a black family living next door—as long as their children didn't bother hers—because any black who could afford to live in this neighborhood would be O.K. She went on to say that the real problem would be in lower-income areas; she mentioned one in Witbank where many retired people live. The blacks who could afford to live in those areas wouldn't be of such high standards, she said. Then, speaking to me, she said, "I read in America where a black family moved into a neighborhood and was stoned." As we talked, the real-estate agent stood at her front door, behind a decorative worked-iron security gate. "We're going to have a black country," she said at one point. "I know that. I'm preparing my kids for it." But she wasn't about to vote for it.

This woman's attitude seemed to me to be typical of that held by many white South Africans I encountered. They know that demographic factors alone will produce greater economic and political power for blacks. Moreover, there are international pressures for change. Conservative white South

Africans will resist, and the most conservative of them say openly that they will fight a guerrilla war against black rule. Moderate whites, such as the real-estate woman, will try to hold on to the privileged position the whites have, and that means that they will most likely vote for the Nationalist Party. And then, when the inevitable comes, they will go along.

During the campaign, the National Party attacked the Democratic Party by linking it to the African National Congress and to Communism, which in the minds of many white South Africans are synonymous. The poster portraying the Democratic leaders as the Three Blind Mice had a hand at the top manipulating the mice with strings. The strings were labelled "Unban A.N.C." and "Unban Communism." The Nats also ran full-page newspaper advertisements that included a photograph, taken at a conference abroad, of Wynand Malan with Joe Slovo, the general secretary of the South African Communist Party, and an A.N.C. official. In bold letters, the ad asked, "ARE THESE MEN PLANNING YOUR FUTURE?!"

There was a limit—self-imposed, in effect—on how far the Nats could go in attacking the Democrats over the issue of the African National Congress. In July, President P. W. Botha invited the A.N.C. leader, Nelson Mandela, for tea at the President's residence, in Cape Town. It was the first time that any senior government official had met with Mandela outside jail since he was imprisoned, for sabotage and treason, twenty-five years ago. South Africans, black and white, were stunned. There was wild speculation about why—especially in the middle of a campaign—Botha would meet with the leader of an organization that his party had long demonized as the enemy of the state. Was Botha trying to damage de Klerk, who in February had become the Party leader against Botha's will? Or was he perhaps trying to make it easier for de Klerk to release Mandela? Finally, the *Weekly Mail*, which has some of the best political reporting in South Africa, especially on matters pertaining to the anti-apartheid movement, revealed, in a front-page story, that government officials had been holding secret meetings with Mandela for nearly three years, and that Mandela had insisted on a meeting with the President as a condi-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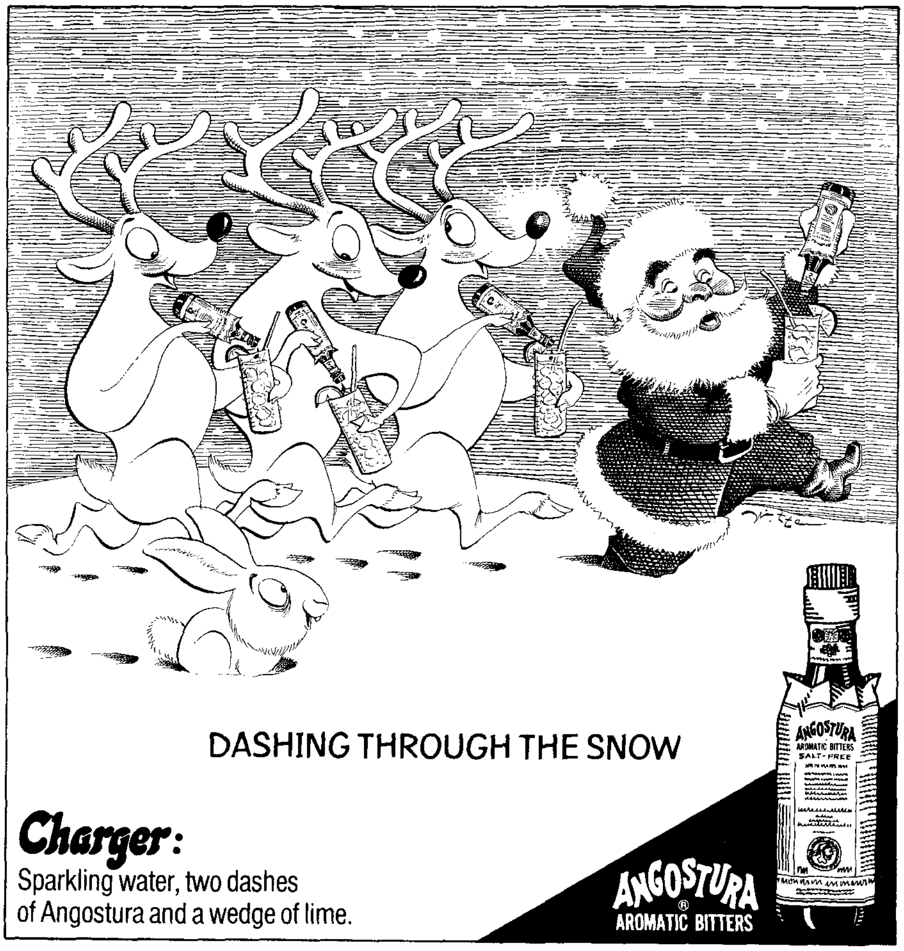

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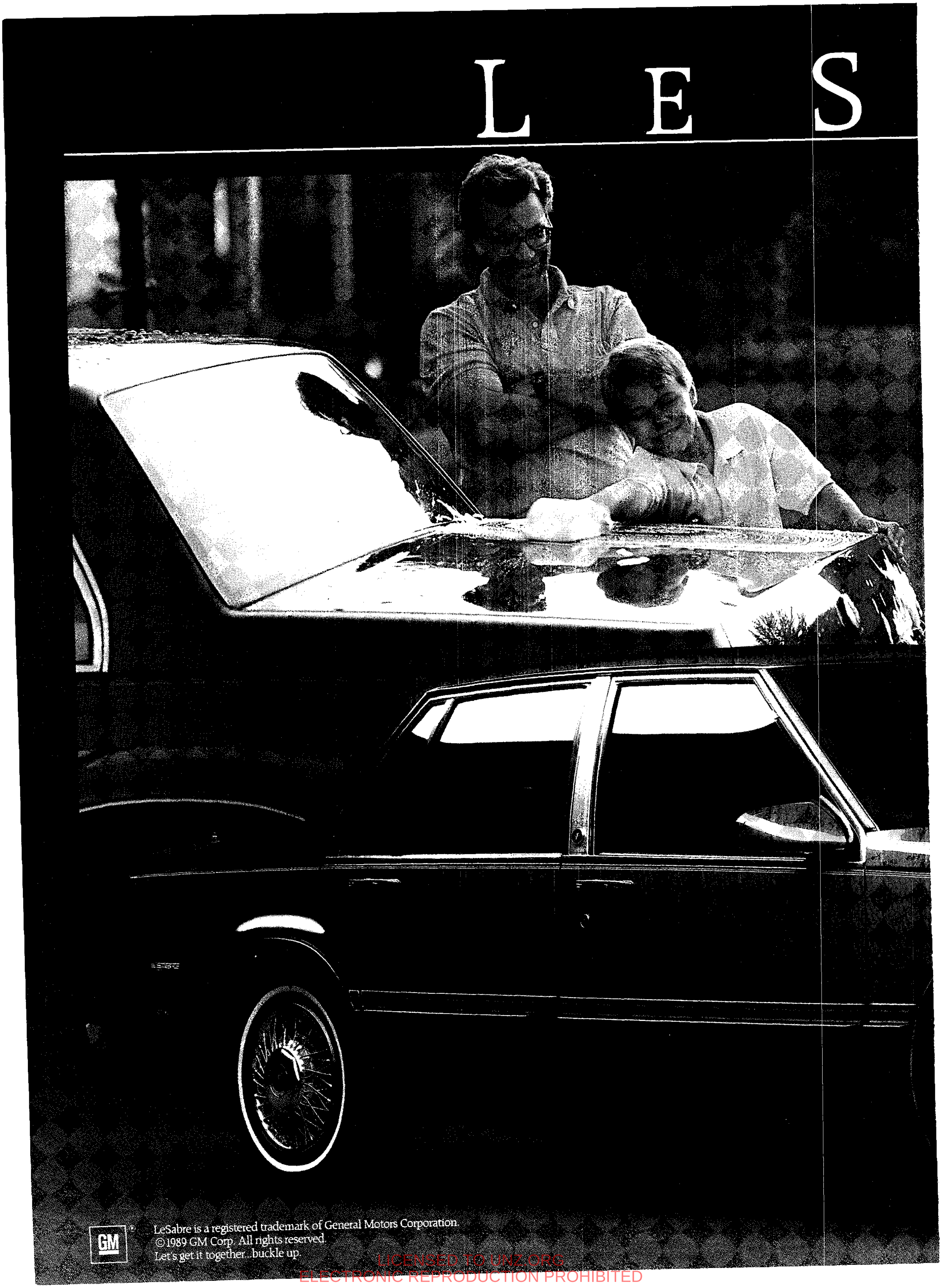

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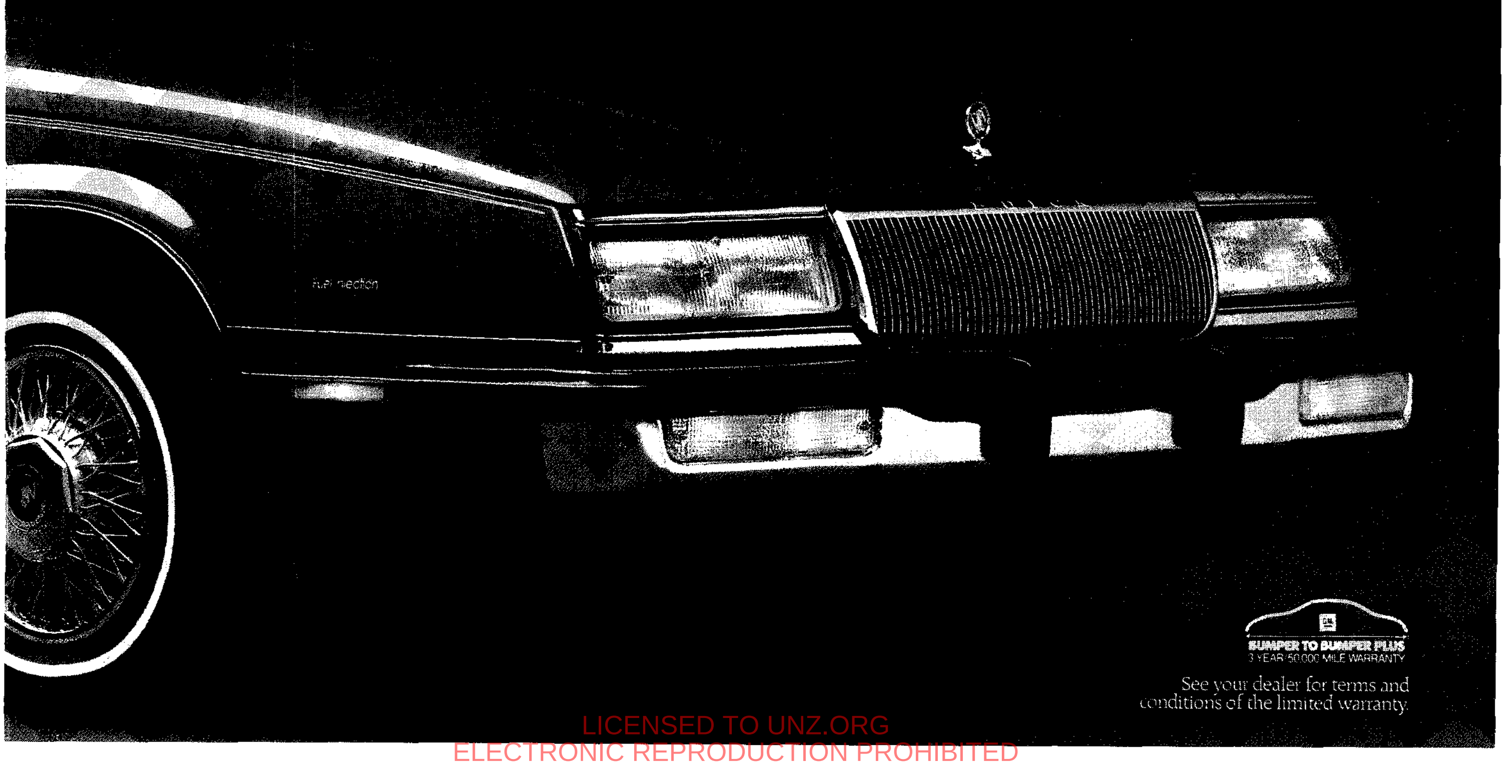

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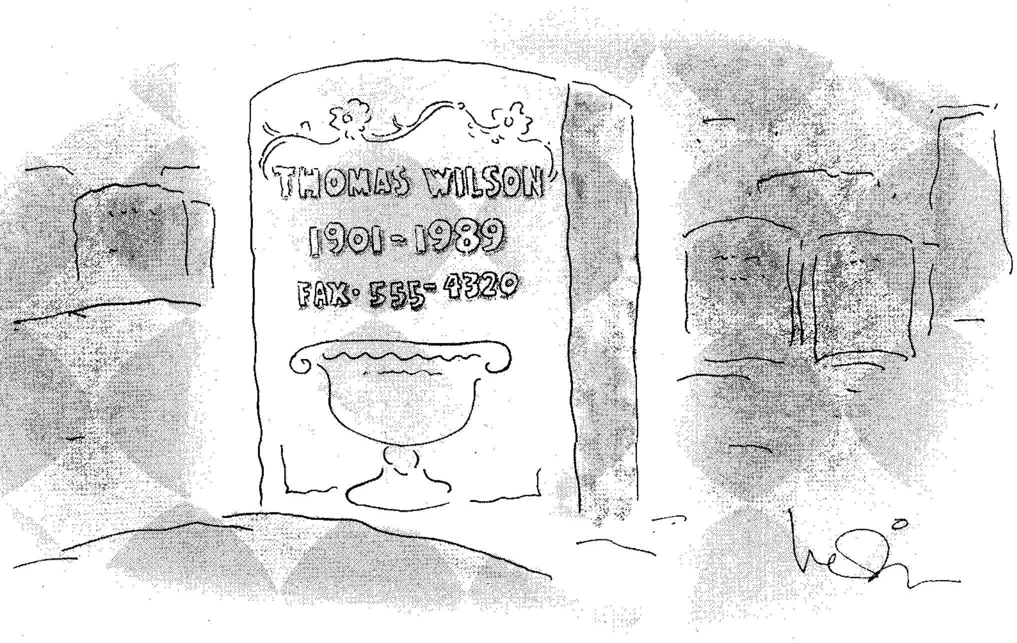


tion for their continuing. While the Mandela-Botha meeting somewhat blunted the Nats' attack on the Democrats, it allowed the Conservatives to sharpen their attacks on the Nats. One Conservative poster asked, in Afrikaans, "PW? FW? Mandela? What's the conspiracy?"

IN August, interparty attacks were eclipsed by feuding within the National Party. The feuding began with an announcement, on Wednesday, August 9th, that de Klerk would meet with President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia on August 28th. It was a meeting that de Klerk wanted as part of a long-range strategy to improve South Africa's international standing. The next day, President Botha issued a terse statement that he was "not aware, in terms of the rules governing overseas journeys by ministers," of the proposed meeting. With this bizarre public rebuke to the Party leader, whose ministerial portfolio was education, the cantankerous Botha created a crisis, and it accelerated rapidly. On Friday, the President ordered the Cabinet members to be at his house, in Cape Town, the following Monday morning. On Saturday morning, de Klerk summoned them to his house, in Pretoria. The weekend was filled with rumors and leaks—that de Klerk and his followers would try to force the President out if he refused to resign, that President Botha intended to dismiss his Foreign Minister and longtime ally, Pik Botha, who was now clearly aligned with de Klerk.

At eight o'clock Monday evening, President Botha went on television and made what must be one of the most extraordinary speeches ever delivered by an elected head of state during a campaign. "Zambia is the center where the A.N.C. plans and coördinates its military and political activities against the Republic of South Africa," he said. "In view of the general election of September 6, 1989, and the deliberate attempts at disruption, I am of the opinion that it is inopportune to meet with President Kaunda at this stage." There was more damage to be done. At that morning's meeting with his Cabinet Ministers, he told the nation, they had asked him to step down. "I asked them what reason I could offer for such a step," he said. "They replied that I could use my health as an excuse." (In January, Botha, who had just turned seventy-three, had suffered a stroke.) "To this I replied that I am not prepared to leave on a lie." He concluded his address to the nation by announcing that he would resign effective the next day.

Some Westerners tended to see the feud as an ideological one. They thought that Botha, with his hard-line reputation, must be opposed to de Klerk because he believed that his proposed successor was too liberal. But in fact de Klerk is more conservative than Botha, and it is personality, *not ideology*, that explains Botha's behavior. An abrasive man, notorious for snapping not only at his enemies but also at his political allies—he was widely referred to as the Crocodile—Botha wasn't noted for his charm, and it wasn't surprising that he didn't exit gracefully from the public stage.

Prominent Nats, of course, tried to put the best possible face on his resignation, saying that it was better for them to be free of Botha, even in this fashion; at least they would no longer have to worry about what he might do next. That was the Party's public position. Privately, however, many members held a different view. "It was a pity," said Mrs. Renier Schoeman, whose husband was the National Party candidate for Parliament in Umhlanga, an upper-income oceanfront suburb north of Durban. "We could have done without it," Mrs. Schoeman told me the morning after Botha's speech. Mr. Schoeman had won by only 557 votes out of 11,833 in 1987, and this time—though he had paid attention to his constituents' needs and so was very popular in his district—he was locked in an even tighter race. Umhlanga is in an English-speaking district, and his opponent was a former Nationalist, Kobus Jordaan, who had joined the Democratic Party. On September 6th, Schoeman lost to Jordaan by fourteen hundred and six votes.

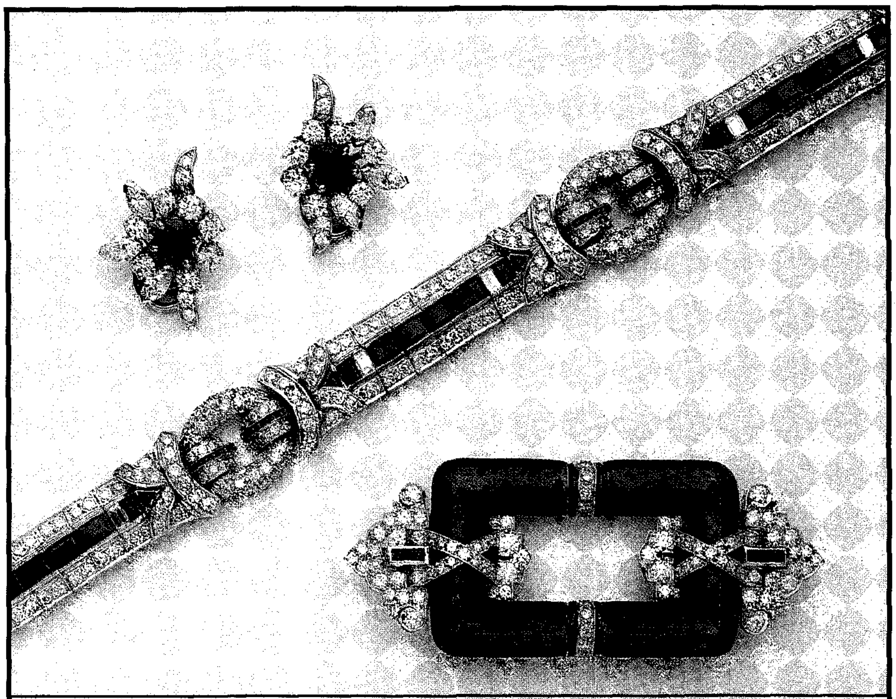
It was possible that there would indeed be some benefits to the Nationalists from Botha's departing diatribe. One effect of his assault on de Klerk's proposed visit to Zambia was to make de Klerk appear more moderate, and that seemed likely to hurt the Democratic Party. It was also to de Klerk's electoral advantage that Botha's resignation allowed him to emerge as a leader and a statesman. De Klerk had his meeting with Kaunda on August 28th, in Livingstone, Zambia, overlooking Victoria Falls, and Kaunda, who has been one of the severest critics of South Africa's racial policies, inexplicably withheld any criticism of the South African leader; a Kaunda aide even went so far as to say that the Zambian president had been impressed.

TWO days after Botha's resignation, de Klerk, who became the Acting State President, ventured into enemy territory for a political rally—into the northern Johannesburg suburb of Houghton, which is politically the Cambridge or the San Francisco of white South African politics, being reliably, resolutely, and proudly liberal. As the people entered the Houghton Primary School, they passed a hand-lettered sign saying "Firearms Must Be Handed In." That was about the extent of the security. In spite of the political friction, the animosities, and the violence in South Africa, and the government's depiction of anti-apartheid groups as "terrorist," government officials, including the most senior ones, have less of a security entourage than their counterparts in the United States or in other African countries. Foreign Minister Pik Botha, for example, arrived at political rallies not with an entourage but in a single car—his.

The school auditorium was jammed, with people standing around the sides and in the back, and even peering in through the windows. They were about to watch and participate in one of the most peculiar political meetings I have ever observed. It was a robust and raucous verbal donnybrook, punctuated by jeering and cheering. De Klerk fielded all the taunts, throwing back responses for two hours. He began lightly, bantering with the crowd about the politics of the northern suburb. "For decades, it has been the stronghold of leftist liberalism," he said. That evoked wild applause. "Now it is the Democratic Party"—more applause and cheers—"but it's still the same old story. My witness is Mrs. Houghton, who is . . . ah, Mrs. Suzman," he said, realizing his gaffe as the audience cheered mightily for the woman who had represented them for thirty-six years. (On September 6th, the Democratic Party won there by a wide margin.)

When de Klerk had been going on for several minutes analyzing and criticizing the Democratic Party's proposals for giving blacks the franchise, someone shouted, "What's your plan? What's your plan?"

"I'm coming to my plan," de Klerk answered. "Now first take your medi-



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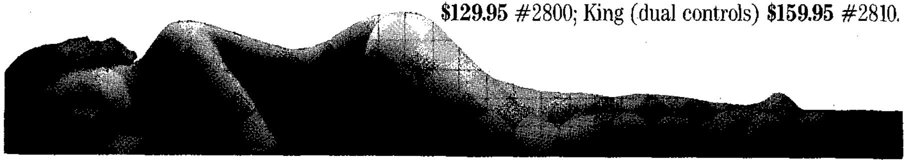

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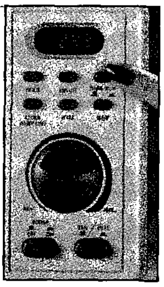

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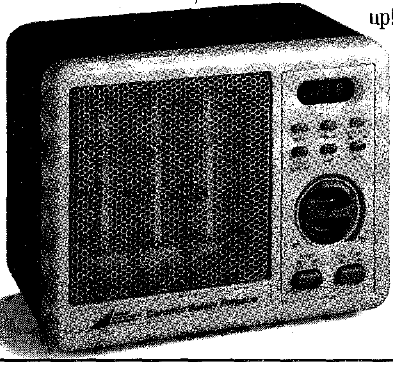

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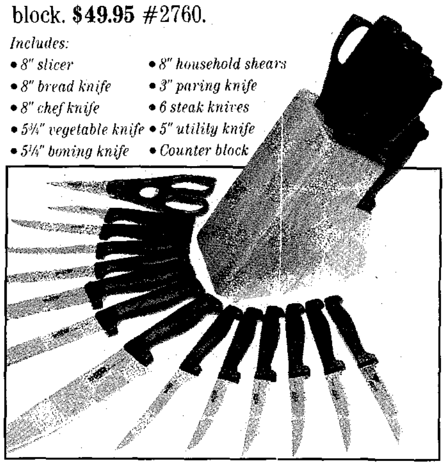
- *5″ utility knife*
- *Counter block*



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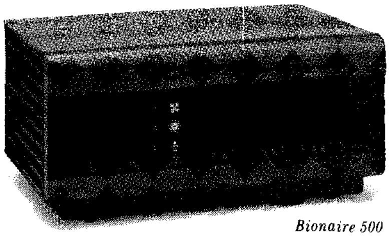

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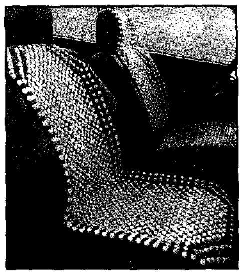

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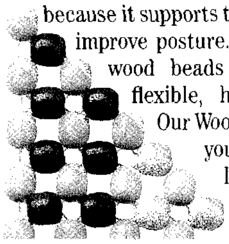

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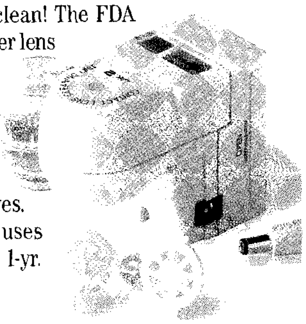

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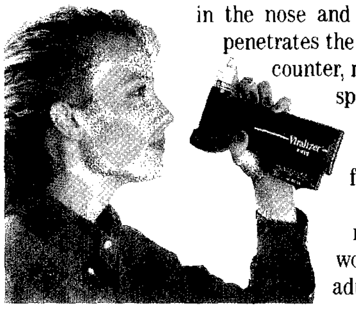

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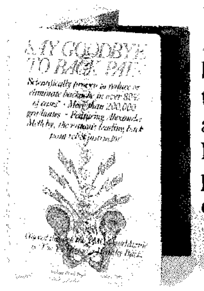

More than 6.5 *million* Americans suffer from back pain daily...and more than 8 out of 10 will eventually suffer from it. Research has shown that 83% of back problems are caused by muscles that have become weak due to stress and lack of exercise. But that's actually good news, because it means that most back pain is preventable! The "Say Goodbye to Back Pain" video is derived from the YMCA's "Y's Way to a Healthy Back" program which is based on research by noted back care expert, Dr. Hans Kraus. This doctor-recommended program is used at YMCA's nationwide, and has helped hundreds of thousands of people where other methods have failed. *Scientifically proven* to reduce or *eliminate* back pain in more than 80% of cases. Consult your doctor before beginning this six-week program of easy, relaxing and amazingly effective exercises which will help restore the strength and flexibility of your back...no matter how long you've neglected it. 96 minutes. **$39.95** #2370.

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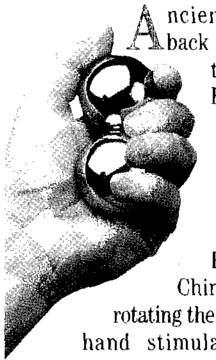

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THE MEDIA DEVELOPMENT GROUP

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cine on yours." That brought laughter and mild applause.

Many minutes later, an impatient member of the crowd shouted, "You're certainly taking your time getting to your proposals!"

De Klerk responded, "I am taking my time because this is my meeting." The audience erupted with laughter, and even some of the politicians and their wives sitting on the stage with de Klerk, who had been looking rather uncomfortable through it all, couldn't suppress a grin.

"There is no doubt in my mind that we have reached a crucial turning point in the history of our country," de Klerk said in his speech. "On one thing there is consensus, and that is that the status quo must be changed, and must be changed drastically." Applause. "We must negotiate a new dispensation." He then reiterated the long-standing policy that the government would not negotiate with "the perpetrators of violence and terrorism," by which he meant the A.N.C. What the goverment calls "violence" and "terrorism" the A.N.C. calls "the armed struggle." There will almost certainly be some give by both sides on this matter. Negotiations were a principal theme of the Nationalists' campaign, and though that was an effective electoral strategy—it seriously blunted the Democrats' claim to be the party that would negotiate—de Klerk and his party did, and do, in fact seem to be sincere in the desire for negotiations. But the government knows that if the negotiations are to have any chance of leading to a peaceful resolution of the country's racial conflict they must be conducted with the A.N.C.—and also with other black organizations, for black politics in South Africa are by no means unified. And while the A.N.C. isn't about to categorically abandon the armed struggle—to do so would cause a serious split in the organization, among other things—it is under international pressure, principally from Moscow, which has long been one of its backers, to negotiate. A possible compromise is for the A.N.C. to "suspend" its military activities for a period to test the government's sincerity about negotiations.

De Klerk told the Houghton audience, and others he addressed, that "the fundamental question" for the voters was: Whom did they trust to represent them in the negotiations? Not the Conservative Party, he said. Voting for it, he said, "inevitably leads to growing confrontation and isolation, because its policy does not offer realistic fulfillment of the reasonable aspirations of all South Africans." De Klerk ignored the fact that the Conservative policy today was the very policy the Nats had followed for forty years. Indeed, often during the campaign it seemed that the Nats were running against their past—that they were, in effect, saying to the voters, "We know we've been wrong, but give us a chance now to do right." Looking to the future, de Klerk said, the voter was left with a choice between the National Party and the Democratic Party. "Both parties admit the need for change—admit the recognition of the right of all South Africans to become involved in government at all levels," he said. But there was a "fundamental and extremely important" difference between the Nationalists and the Democrats. The difference lay, he said, "in how they believe political power is to be accorded to all South Africans." He added, "The Democratic Party advocates one man, one vote, on common voters' rolls, at all levels."

"That's democracy!" someone shouted.

"There are other forms of democracy," de Klerk shot back. "So you are overstepping if you think only a one-man, one-vote system on common voters' rolls can result in democracy."

The issue of one man, one vote haunts white South Africans. A Democratic Party campaign worker in Umhlanga told me that the question she was most often asked when she was canvassing was what the Democratic Party's position was on one man, one vote. A Democratic worker in Fish Hoek, a quiet fishing village on the Cape Peninsula, told me the same thing. Even some of the most liberal white South Africans—people who don't hesitate to declare that all race-based legislation should be repealed outright, and that all residential areas, swimming pools, schools should be desegregated—stumble when they get to the issue of one man, one vote. The most common argument against black majority rule—and it comes from conservatives, moderates, and liberals—is that it will result in South Africa's becoming like other black African countries. "One man, one vote—once" is the glib slogan used against the idea; it means that after one democratic election the leader would become a dictator.

d. ehrenberg

That was what de Klerk meant when he told the Houghton audience that one man, one vote could result in "the end of democracy." The audience's applause indicated agreement. De Klerk also received loud and sustained applause when he said, "We are not prepared, in making other people free, to allow this country to fall into chaos." In other words, many South Africans, even the liberals, fear that black rule would lead to the kind of debt and poverty that have beset most other African countries.

While this belief disguises the underlying racist attitude that blacks aren't capable of democratic rule or economic development, no one who values democracy and human rights can find much to be proud of on the African continent. Even Desmond Tutu, the Anglican Archbishop of Southern Africa, during his travels to Zaire and Kenya, has said that the repressive practices of these governments make it easier for white South Africans to defend apartheid. But there are many good reasons that a black-ruled South Africa would not sink like other black African countries: black South Africans are better educated; there is a much more advanced economy and a stronger industrial base. Above all, perhaps, South Africa's blacks already live better than the rest of black Africa and they have no desire for their country to become as economically and politically impoverished as nearly all others on the continent.

"We say that white domination must come to an end," de Klerk told the audience at Houghton. "But we are not prepared to exchange it for black domination." To accomplish this end of white rule, but without black rule, the Nats are now advocating a political system based on "groups." The latest National Party idea is for the country to be divided into racial and cultural groups; each of these groups would elect delegates to a federal Parliament, where geographic areas would also be represented. Altogether, there would be about twenty-four groups, or voting blocs, including one bloc for people who didn't want to belong to any racial group. The blacks would be divided into perhaps ten groups, representing the various black tribes in South Africa.

The Nats' group approach sees South Africa as a country of many minorities, one of which is the whites. The reality, of course, is that it is a country of a black majority and a white minority. The effect of the Nationalists' plan—indeed, the purpose of it—would be to dilute the voting strength of the black majority by dividing it among various black groups, while giving the whites equal voting strength with any one group of blacks. Another effect of the plan, which no one seems to discuss, would be to reinforce tribalism—the very cause of the instability in most of the rest of black Africa, the very instability and turmoil that white South Africans say would engulf their country if there were black majority rule.

When de Klerk finished at Houghton, he was given a sustained ovation. Then he sat down and lit a cigarette. "No smoking!" someone shouted, pointing to the signs in the auditorium. De Klerk smiled and put his cigarette out. He even stayed around for questions. At one point during his speech, he had responded to shouting by saying, "There will be question time, and then you can ask me. And especially be sure that the beautiful young lady will get the first opportunity." The audience howled. When question time came, the Acting State President kept his promise. The woman he had referred to was Sharon Bond, the chairman of the Save Our Schools Committee. The school in question was the Johannesburg High School for Girls, which was a hundred and two years old and was being forced to close because there were not enough white students; enrollment was down to two hundred and five, from a capacity of six hundred and eighty. The Save Our Schools Committee, which was made up of parents and "old girls," as well as some students and teachers, wanted the school to be opened to blacks and coloreds in order to increase the enrollment. Government law prohibits school integration. She wanted to know what de Klerk would do about the Johannesburg High School for Girls.

The school was situated in the "gray area" of Hillbrow, Ms. Bond said. Recent legislation did permit "free-settlement areas"—areas where all races can live—but a "gray area" is one that has been integrated de facto, though not de jure. Hillbrow, on the edge of Johannesburg's central business district, is a mixed residential and commercial area.

In responding to the concerns, de Klerk outlined the National Party's view of integration and education, and in so doing provided insights into how far his government was likely to go or not go in dismantling racial laws. The government's policy on education was "based on sound educational principles," he said. "It is a worldwide accepted norm that education in your

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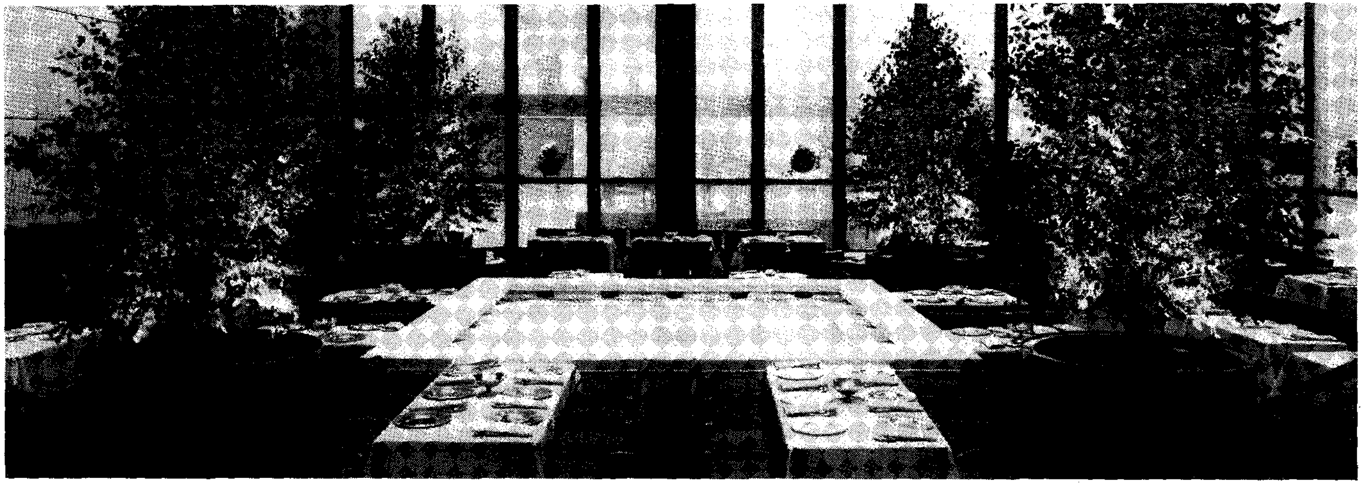

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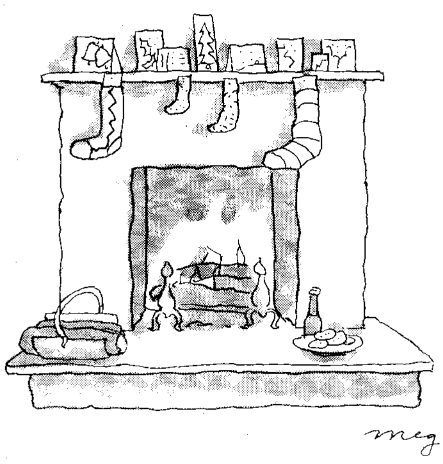
mother tongue, education in a known environment, is the best form of education. . . . I therefore say, in the forming years of the child it is best that that child go to a school where in his or her mother tongue that child is educated amongst people of his or her own community." He said that the National Party government accepted "the principle of freedom of association," and would therefore designate certain residential areas as free-settlement areas. "If, however, your interpretation of freedom of association is that everything must be open, then it is no longer freedom of association," he told the Houghton audience. "It becomes enforced integration. Then you prohibit the association of a number of people who say, 'We want to associate on the basis of exclusivity.' " In other words, people who want to live in an all-white neighborhood will be legally permitted to do so, but even in integrated neighborhoods there won't be integrated public schools. Parents who want their children to attend integrated schools can send them to private schools, he said, and he added that his government would increase subsidies to private schools.

A few days after the meeting at Houghton, I looked up Sharon Bond. Ms. Bond is thirty-one years old, with a fifteen-year-old daughter attending Johannesburg High School for Girls. She lives in a working-class neighborhood of small houses with red corrugated-metal roofs, close together on small plots. "I'm a moderate, I'm not a radical," she said as we sat in her living room. "I've never even been involved in politics before." In the past, she had always voted for the Nationalists. But the school issue had changed her. "The Nats have been talking about reform for so long," she said. "Here's an opportunity to show they're serious, by opening up the schools on a nonracial basis, and they won't do it."

Ms. Bond's views are not, however, as simple or as liberal as they might at first seem. "We're not in favor of opening all schools," she said, to my surprise. Only those schools where the parents vote for them to be open, she explained. "The ultimate decision is to allow people to gravitate to where they want to live. Let the Conservative Party people have their white areas, have their white schools. Give the people that freedom of choice. It's O.K. to have segregated areas. People must be allowed to choose for themselves. I don't want to force integration on people who don't want it." Here she was voicing the National Party position. But she may have been reflecting the quandary that a lot of white South African voters faced: they wanted to go further than the National Party had gone in the past, but that didn't mean they wanted a fully integrated society.

THE electoral campaign was accompanied by the most intense and open anti-apartheid activity since the government declared a state of emergency in June of 1986. The government's action back then was a response to three years of often violent political protests in the black townships. Under the state of emergency, the government banned or restricted anti-apartheid organizations; detained some thirty thousand individuals, often in solitary confinement and for long periods without charges, and, upon releasing them, placed severe restrictions on their movements and activities; and censored the media, local and international, prohibiting, among other things, any report of anti-government activity and unrest. The result was an effective muting of the anti-apartheid movement. "When we were in detention, we looked around and thought up new ways" to fight against apartheid, says one black leader, who was detained for two years and is still under an order that forbids him to be quoted by name. "The regime is always pushing us to the terrain of violence, where it is strongest. We thought there was a dire need of new, creative ways of confronting the regime—not on the basis of violence but on the basis of morality."

In June of this year, a group calling itself the Mass Democratic Movement announced that it would conduct a "defiance campaign" to coincide with the election. As the name suggests, the defiance campaign called upon people to disobey racial laws. The Mass Democratic Movement was a loose coalition of several hundred political organizations, civil-rights groups, churches, and unions. Essentially, it was a reincarnation of the United Democratic Front, which was formed in 1983 and consisted of more than six hundred organizations, with two million members, by the time it was effectively banned, in 1988, and of the powerful Congress of South African Trade Unions, or COSATU, which was launched in November of 1985, and has been restricted from engaging in political activities since early 1988. The M.D.M. had no structure, no officers, and no telephone; so how could the authorities ban it?



The previous use of civil disobedience as a tactic in the struggle against apartheid had been the Defiance Campaign against unjust laws, in the early nineteen-fifties. The government had then responded with heavy repression, including the introduction of laws that provided for public whipping, and the campaign had been crushed. By 1960, "people had lost faith in nonviolence," this same black leader, who was involved in formulating the latest civil-disobedience campaign, told me in August. The anti-apartheid movement then had turned to insurrection, violence, boycotts. Among the factors that led to the resurrection of nonviolent defiance was a desire to broaden and strengthen the anti-apartheid movement by bringing in individuals and organizations that were opposed to apartheid but would not be associated with violence or boycotts. The election campaign was an obvious time to begin a program of civil disobedience. "Around an election, the denial of human rights gets into sharper focus, because when others are voting it heightens the fact that the majority are not," Murphy Morobe, a prominent M.D.M. leader, said. Morobe, a stocky man with a round face, is thirty-three years old but looks older—perhaps because he has spent a lot of time in prison. For his role in the student uprisings in Soweto in 1976, he was detained and kept in solitary confinement for eighteen months and was then convicted of sedition, for which he served three years in prison. In June of

1987, he was detained under the state of emergency for being a leader of the United Democratic Front. In September of 1988, he and two others escaped from jail, fleeing to the American Consulate, where they were granted refuge. They remained there for thirty-seven days, until American officials negotiated with South African officials not to rearrest Morobe and the others if they left the Consulate.

The defiance campaign put the Nationalist government in a quandary. If it cracked down hard on those who were using nonviolent means to protest apartheid, its action would tell the South African voters and the world that it wasn't serious about reform. But if it did not act sternly it would hand the Conservative Party an issue, and no doubt lose voters. The first target of the defiance campaign was hospitals: beginning in August, blacks showed up for treatment at white hospitals throughout the country. Focussing on the medical system manifested a practical as well as a moral aim of the civil disobedience. Many of the country's white hospitals are seriously underutilized—more than fifty per cent of the beds at one of the white hospitals where blacks showed up for treatment were empty—while many black hospitals are horrendously overcrowded, with patients forced to sleep on the floor. And sometimes when an ambulance has refused to take a patient to a nearby white hospital the patient has died during the trip to a black hospital farther away.

The move against the hospitals was generally without incident; the hospitals accepted the blacks who showed up, and the police acted with restraint—a restraint that they ceased to exercise as the campaign accelerated. So active and visible was the M.D.M. that it quickly acquired the same prominence in the news as the three major political parties.

The National Party portrayed the M.D.M. as a sinister force—the Minister for Law and Order announced that the government had "alarming information" that the movement intended to engage in violence for the purpose of disrupting the elections, but he later had to retract that claim—and it tried desperately to link the M.D.M. and the defiance campaign to the Democratic Party. There were some loose links between members of the Democratic Party and the M.D.M., since the M.D.M. consisted of many organizations committed, just as the Democratic Party is, to a peaceful, nonviolent end to apartheid, and Wynand Malan went as far as to defend the M.D.M.—a risky political act. "We acknowledge the M.D.M.'s right to protest, because there is no other way for the voteless to make their voices heard," Malan said. Most Democratic candidates, however, sought to dissociate the Party from the M.D.M., and as the defiance campaign intensified there was palpable concern that those events would hurt the Party severely at the polls. "The M.D.M. is killing us with these demonstrations," Jannie Momberg, the Democratic candidate in Simon's Town, told me at a Friday-evening party for his campaign. "Old ladies are going to look down at those beaches tomorrow and see the mass of blacks, and they're going to vote Nat."

Most of Cape Town's beaches had been integrated, but one that hadn't became a target of the defiance campaign the next day. It was at Strand, a community of retired Afrikaners. In

ART NOTES

— PART 3 OF 3 —

WHAT DETERMINES THE PRICE OF AN OLDER AMERICAN PAINTING?

The role of authenticity: fakes, forgeries, signatures, and provenance.

Robert C. Vose, Jr., is wary about a painting's provenance, or history of ownership. "For $25, a man named William Roberts used to invent an extremely professional looking provenance for unscrupulous sellers," says Vose. "Only a provenance which can be verified will add to a painting's value, particularly if the painting has been in a collection known for quality." Inclusion in a "catalog raisonne" (the listing of an artist's complete work) is highly desirable, and a painting that has been exhibited or has won prizes will bring a premium price.

A dealer's crucial role is to determine authenticity. "In my 50 years as a dealer," continues Bob Vose, "I have found that when an artist's prices begin to climb, fakes and forgeries abound. When R.A. Blakelock sold a painting in 1916 for $20,000, he became one of the most faked artists in history. In one year recently, I was asked to authenticate over 100 Blakelocks and found only one to be the genuine article." "Over the past two years especially," adds Terry Vose, "with paintings selling at auction in the 30-50 million range, you have to be very cautious."

If an artist signed his paintings (and many did not), then a signature can add to the price. But Bob Vose warns, "Vose Galleries does not put a heavy emphasis on signatures because most fakes are signed! If we see a signed Stuart or Smibert, for example, we become suspicious since neither artist signed his work."

Powers and Hall attorney Robert W. Holmes, Jr., who specializes in art transactions, cautions: "fakes come in many different forms, such as questionable works with fake signatures, works by students, followers and contemporaries which are sold as originals, and newly fabricated fakes, in many cases utilized old stretchers, antique frames, artificially induced crackling and the like. The best way to avoid being defrauded is to deal only with well established reputable dealers who are willing to give guarantees and back them up with refund policies which are honored in practice."

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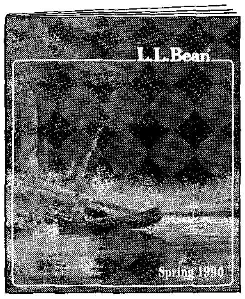

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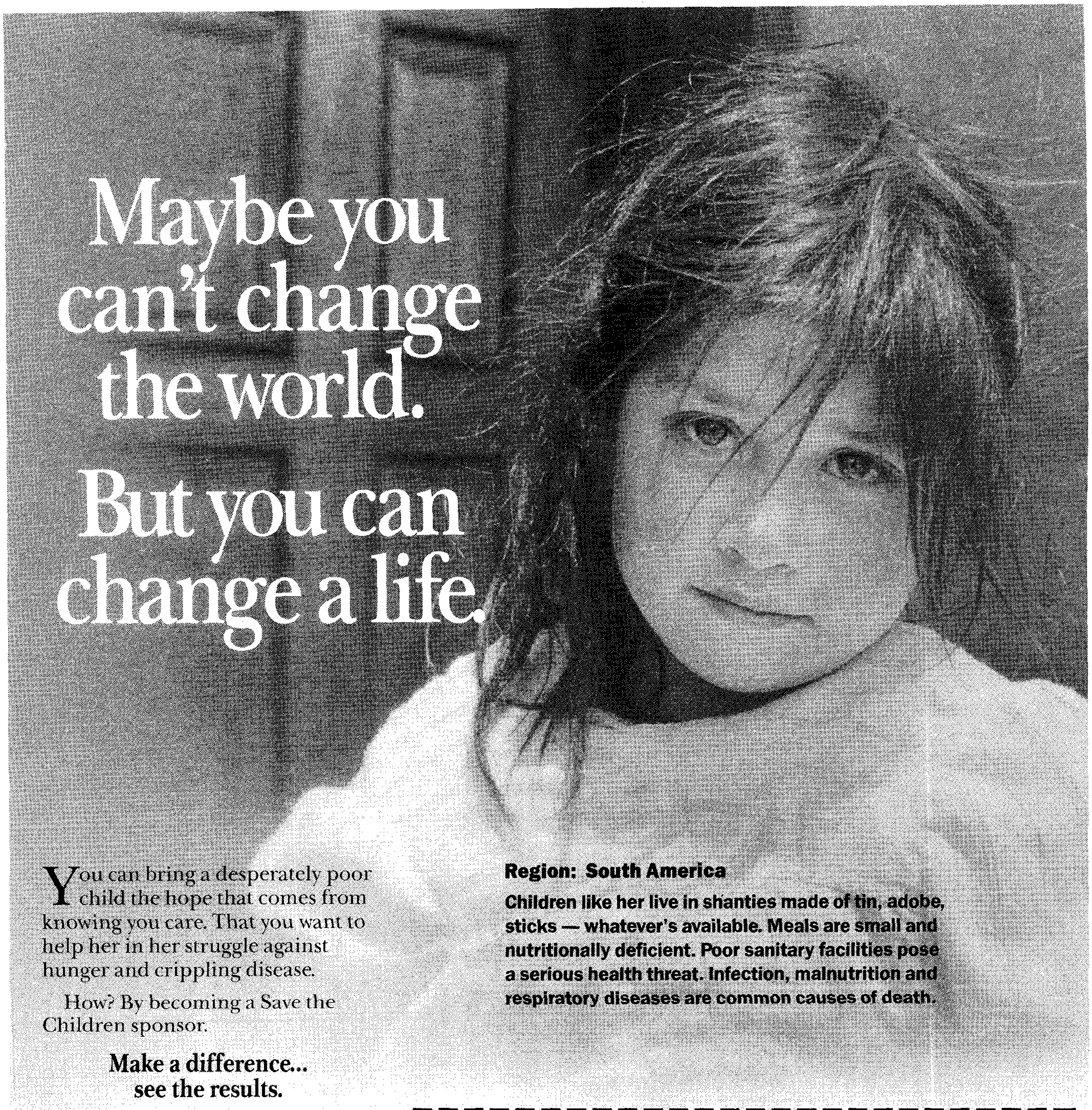
preparation for the M.D.M.'s action, the authorities had set up portable stanchions and strung a candy-cane-striped ribbon along about two miles of beautiful sandy beach. A permanent beach sign said "Surfing with Any Type of Surfboard Windsail-Board or Paddleboard Strictly Prohibited in All Bathing Areas Except 1 May-31 October." Nearby, another said "Dogs Not Allowed." For the day, the official pretext for closing the beach was displayed on a temporary sign, in English and Afrikaans: "Danger. No Entry. SAP Dog Training." (The SAP is the South African Police.) The beach was deserted except for policemen with German shepherds; at one point, ten men marched single file between the street and the low-tide line, each with a German shepherd on a leash.

"This is a sad day for South Africa," a white man said, straining to repress his anger as he surveyed the line of men and dogs from the sidewalk in front of an elegant high-rise apartment building. He was walking with his wife and their fourteen-month-old daughter, and he gave his name as Neville. "I will never come and swim here again until they open up this beach," he said. "Beyond this good stretch, it's stones," he went on, waving a hand toward the east, where a jagged mountain juts into False Bay. That was the non-whites' beach, Neville said. A coil of razor wire running from the road to the water's edge insures that the blacks and the coloreds don't stray onto the whites' beach. "This reform process is a lot of junk," Neville went on. "Until such time as they absolutely abolish apartheid, all their talk about reform is rubbish."

Not everyone watching on that Saturday agreed. About a hundred yards away were three women, probably in their late sixties or early seventies. They were standing in front of a five-story apartment building with glassed-in balconies. Across the street was a sign reading: "Beach & Sea. Whites Only." And that was exactly how it should be, the women agreed. In Miami, one of them said, all the hotels had their private beaches. So what was wrong with the whites' having their private beach here, which they paid for with their taxes? Besides, one of the women said, blacks only came to the beach to drink the water. "They think it's medicine."

Half a mile or so from where the women were standing is the center of Strand, where several streets of one- and two-story modern stores converge on a grassy traffic circle that has in its center a palm tree, flagpoles, and a fountain. In a blacktop parking lot is a brick building that houses toilets. "Europeans Only. Ladies" is the sign on one door. Another sign indicates where the "European Taxis" line up for white passengers. Police milled about, some with dogs on leashes, many with their sjamboks—long whips of hard rubber and plastic. The parking lot was full of yellow police vehicles, with heavy wire mesh protecting the windows. Inside one, a large van, a woman was screaming and banging on the metal. People of all races—whites, blacks, Indians, coloreds—were sitting on a retaining wall, eating, drinking, and chatting. Archbishop Tutu arrived, took a symbolic walk on the beach, and left. Then the police, about half of whom were colored, decided to break up this peaceful Saturday-afternoon scene. With dogs on leashes and whips in hand, they began moving in a column along the retaining wall, ordering people to leave the area. There was no visible resistance—no taunts, no chanting, no stone-throwing. But something caused a group of policemen to start chasing a black man, and he tripped and fell at the circle. A plainclothes policeman, a short young white man in bluejeans and a blue sweatshirt, hit him with a thick belt. A colored policeman sicked his large brown dog on the man as he lay on the ground, the dog straining at the leash, up on its hind legs, growling. Another group of policemen, including the young plainclothesman, set out after a white man in a T-shirt, knee-length shorts, and running shoes. There were too many people on the streets for him to move quickly, and soon the police seized him, beat him with their sjamboks, and led him off.

A heavyset woman in her thirties was clearly shaken by what she was witnessing. She said that that morning a group of black boys, fifteen and sixteen years old, had been walking down her street when the police had set upon them with sjamboks. "They were children," she said. "They were just chil-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dren. The police didn't have to beat them." Then she watched as the police beat people who had gathered at the pier. She talked rapidly and nervously. "I'm not political," she said repeatedly. But after what she had seen today she intended to vote for "the most progressive party I can find." Scenes of brutality might affect other white South Africans in a similar way, but for the most part South Africans don't see them. Under the state of emergency, it is illegal to report on police actions and unrest. Indeed, it is unlawful for reporters even to be present. At Strand, the police rounded up network television crews, as well as many other reporters and photographers, and detained them for up to two hours—until the police were finished with their work for the day.

The next day, Sunday, there was to be an anti-apartheid demonstration in Cape Town, but the government banned it, and policemen were deployed to keep people from assembling. So instead a couple of thousand would-be demonstrators gathered at St. George's Cathedral, Archbishop Tutu's church, on Wale Street, in downtown Cape Town. By three o'clock, the narrow nave and the aisles of the cathedral were packed with people of all ages and colors. As they waited for the service to begin, individuals and groups would break into song, ululating and dancing the *toyi-toyi*, a rhythmic hopping from one foot to the other. Then the congregation sang the Lord's Prayer and listened to a Scripture reading, after which Archbishop Tutu, in a scarlet skullcap and a long black cape, stood up to address it.

Since the government had barred the rally, he said, he had called a church service. "You know, of course, don't you, that this country claims to be a Christian country," he went on. "In its constitution it appeals to the name of God, and so I say, 'Ah, well, we can have a church service, man, in this country we can have a church service.' " There was applause, and he said, "This is a Christian country, remember. On the N2"—a freeway into the city from the east—"there is a roadblock. What is the roadblock for? To stop people in South Africa, in a Christian country, from coming to church.

"They say apartheid is dead. Apartheid is dead?" Tutu's voice rose, reflecting incredulity. "It is one of the most extraordinary corpses around. They had police, they had dogs, they had tear gas. To do what? To stop people from walking on God's beaches. I mean, God's beaches! They had dogs standing there. . . . They could not win. If we got to the beaches, we won. If we did not get to the beaches, we won, because you were saying to the world, 'If we do not get to the beaches, we have been stopped by apartheid. We have been stopped by dogs. Dogs can walk on God's beaches. Black people can't walk on God's beaches.' " He spoke without notes.

"Have you ever looked at that signboard properly? That signboard says 'BEACH AND SEA—WHITES.' God's sea! That sea was there long before these people came here. We said, 'Come to our country.' " There was sustained applause. "And now they are saying to us, 'You, you black people, don't go into God's sea. God's sea here is for whites.' God's sea?" His voice rose again. "*Twak!* This is God's sea, this is our country, and we are claiming what is ours!"

When the Archbishop sat down, any pretense that this was a church service, and not a political rally, ended. Almost everything that followed was illegal under the emergency regulations, which prohibit any action that advances the cause of any banned organization. A black man with a short Afro haircut, a mustache, and a goatee headed for the microphone, stripping off his jacket as he went, to reveal a white cotton V-neck shirt bearing a United Democratic Front emblem. It was illegal for him to wear that shirt, and many others in the congregation were also wearing T-shirts bearing the names of banned political organizations. There were shouts of "Viva U.D.F.!" and "Viva A.N.C.!" The shouts, too, were illegal. The man at the microphone read a long message from the A.N.C., and both the message and the delivery of it were illegal. A U.D.F. banner hanging in the cathedral was illegal. But that day the police respected the religious sanctuary.

After the A.N.C. message was read, the crowd began clapping, chanting, singing, and dancing the *toyi-toyi*. Then a man wearing a blue blazer, a white shirt, and a tie got up to speak. His black hair was thinning, and he had a thick black beard. In South African terms, he was a "colored." His name was Trevor Manuel, he was thirty-three years old, and he had helped found the U.D.F. in the western Cape. He had been detained from August of 1986 until last February (except for a two-week stint). Under the terms of his restriction order, or ban, which was a fairly standard one, he had since been required to report to the police twice a day, and had to be at home between six in the evening and six in the morning. In addition, he was not allowed to engage in any U.D.F. activity, to address more than ten people, or to be present at any gathering at which the government was criticized. That Sunday, he was defying it all. He approached the microphones, thrust his right arm upward, clenched his fist, opened his mouth wide, and let loose with the battle cry of the liberation movement, "A-MAN-DLA"—"Power." The cathedral erupted as the congregation roared "AWETHU"—"To the people"—in response. This was repeated several times. The congregation sang, chanted, and danced. Then Manuel said, "Comrades, there's an old Kikuyu proverb: 'No matter how long the night, the day is sure to come.' We are gathered here today to unban our organizations." That began a procession across the church in front of the altar. First came several young men unfurling a huge banner, at least ten feet high, bearing a map of Africa and bold letters identifying their organization, the Cape Youth Congress. Then came the Detainees' Parents Support Committee. "We unban ourselves as of today," its spokesman said. Ten white men and women of college age unfurled the banner of the End Conscription Campaign. The congregation erupted in the loudest expression of approval yet. And so it went—banned organization following banned organization, each unfurling its colors and declaring itself unbanned. Finally, a second U.D.F. banner was unfurled, and a spokesman declared, "The U.D.F. is unbanned!"

The government responded to the weekend's anti-apartheid activity in the Cape, and throughout the country, by announcing that it would "crack down mercilessly” on the growing defiance campaign. Police began rounding up the M.D.M.’s leaders. One of the first to be arrested was Mohammed Valli Moosa, the acting general secretary of the U.D.F. and a prominent M.D.M. organizer; he was one of the three political detainees who escaped from jail last September and took refuge in the American Consulate for thirty-seven days. (Valli was held until late September.) Eight days after Trevor Manuel’s appearance at St. George’s and after he had given an interview to John Carlin, of the London *Independent*—both acts were in violation of his restriction order—Manuel was picked up by the police and put in jail. (He was also held until late September.) Altogether, two hundred and twenty-six people were detained, under the state of emergency, between August 1st and September 3rd, according to the Human Rights Commission in Johannesburg.

Instead of dampening the defiance campaign, the government’s crackdown stoked it, as might have been predicted. The M.D.M. announced another demonstration in Cape Town for the Saturday before the election, and the government banned it. The government also issued a stern reminder to journalists that under the emergency regulations they were forbidden to be in any area where there would be police action. Many South African newspapers, as if they were engaged in a defiance campaign themselves, were reporting on the unrest and printing relevant photographs—of Archbishop Tutu being teargassed, of burning-tire barricades in the townships—more daringly than they had since the state of emergency had been imposed. What concerned the authorities more, however, was that the foreign press, and particularly foreign television crews, had managed to record much of the police crackdown. On the morning of the proposed second demonstration, Tom Masland, of the Chicago *Tribune*, and I were picked up around ten o’clock and taken to police headquarters in central Cape Town by two plainclothes policemen, who had already consumed enough alcohol to make it easily detectable. At the police station, we identified ourselves as reporters, but then were released while, for some inexplicable reason, at least twenty other reporters were being held in a large room. Altogether, fifty-two

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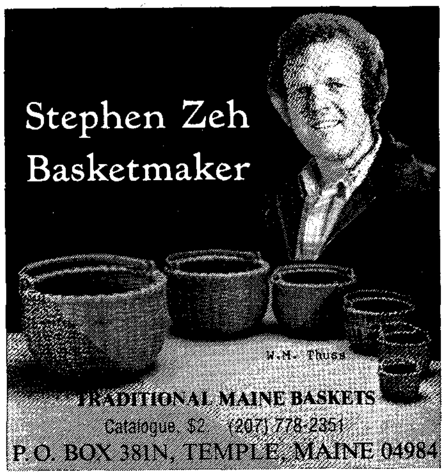
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journalists were picked up in Cape Town on that day, nearly all of them photographers or members of television crews.

September 2nd, the day of the demonstration, was a cold, gray, rainy Saturday. Between two hundred and three hundred participants assembled near St. George's Cathedral. A police helicopter hovered noisily overhead. The scene was peaceful until police moved in on the ground, first seizing the leaders at the front of the assemblage, including the Reverend Allan Boesak, the president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, who had been detained for several hours along with Archbishop Tutu as a result of a demonstration in Cape Town the day before. The leaders were put into a police van and taken away. Then the police began moving in from the rear, rounding up protesters like cattle, shoving them into vans, and driving off with them. As the protesters were being driven to jail, they sang, some of them managing to extend clenched fists through small circular openings in the wire mesh covering the windows. There was cheering from bystanders, who from the start seemed to have outnumbered the demonstrators. At one point, a phalanx of police formed a cordon and trapped a group of people standing beside the Board of Executors Building. Sjamboks and clubs landed both on demonstrators and on spectators, some of whom were tourists.

A few blocks away, several hundred demonstrators were peacefully occupying the cobblestone Greenmarket Square, where a flea market was open, as one is every day, Monday through Saturday. On one side stands the Inn on the Square, a nine-story hotel, which the police had raided earlier in the day, seizing television crews who had hoped to film events from their rooms. The police ordered the demonstrators to disperse, and when they didn't fired tear-gas cannisters. Crowds surged down the side streets. Then police discharged a water cannon mounted on a truck, but instead of water the cannon sprayed purple dye—so that demonstrators could be identified and picked up later. A demonstrator managed to scramble to the top of the truck and get control of the cannon. He turned it on the police and on the surrounding buildings. Soon the gutters were running with purple dye, and several sandstone buildings, including the nineteenth-century Metropolitan Methodist Church, on one corner, had purple exteriors. Purple-dye-drenched demonstrators, their eyes stinging from the tear gas, walked around town, among the Saturday shoppers. For all the violence and turmoil on this Saturday, central Cape Town was not convulsed by disturbances. Shoppers far outnumbered demonstrators, and they went right on shopping, seemingly unconcerned about the turbulence. All over the city, there were certainly more policemen and plainclothesmen than demonstrators.

The atmosphere was tense around St. George's when Archbishop Tutu arrived, about two o'clock. Police surrounded the church. Behind it, police cars, vans for hauling people away, and armored personnel carriers with water cannons mounted on top filled Queen Victoria Avenue, which runs past the Supreme Court building and a multistory granite building housing the Cape provincial offices. There were at least two hundred policemen on hand, with sjamboks, rifles, and dogs. Inside the church, Archbishop Tutu, with several priests, talked about how to end the day peacefully. Eventually, he walked down the nave, past the silent congregation, and out the back of the church, and crossed a blacktop parking lot. A police officer, a tall man with a mustache, met Tutu at the edge of the parking lot. They talked for a few minutes, and then Tutu went back inside. While the congregation sang the Lord's Prayer, I could see police vehicles pulling away.

Then began a service that was in marked contrast to the one two weeks before. This one was quiet, subdued. Today, Tutu was a pastor ministering to his frightened flock. "It is important for you to know that all moral right is on your side," he said, again speaking without notes. "Yes, you may be clobbered, as some of you have been clobbered. Yes, you may cry, you may get beaten. But didn't we say—or were they only slogans?—didn't we say that some are still going to be arrested? Some are still going to be detained. Some are still going to run the gauntlet of tear gas. Some are even going to die." The audience was silent. "Did you think it was figures of speech?

When we said that in a struggle there are casualties, did you think it was figures of speech? . . . This is for real, this is for real. And we have committed ourselves, we have committed ourselves to this struggle until freedom is won." The congregation applauded.

"Apartheid is in and of itself violent," Tutu went on. "So, my friends, do not sit there as if you had drunk an unexpected dose of castor oil. Don't sit there looking glum. . . . You've got to straighten up your shoulders. Come on, straighten up your shoulders and say, 'We shall be free!' " The members of the congregation shuffled in their chairs. "Come on. Stand! Stand! Stand upright!" They stood up. "Here we go: 'We shall be free!' Now we say, 'All of us together, black and white, in a free South Africa.' "

WHITE South Africans elected ninety-three Nationalists to the white Parliament, thirty-nine Conservatives, and thirty-three Democrats. (One race ended in a tie.) That was a loss of thirty seats for the National Party. The Democrats had fared better than had generally been expected, and the Conservatives had fallen far short of their expectations. For those South Africans who believe in greater political rights for blacks and an end to apartheid, the results were cause for some celebration, as they were for many Westerners. But the results need to be viewed with a certain caution. The number of seats that a party wins is skewed by the manner in which the districts are drawn. Only twenty per cent of the white South African voters opted for the Democratic Party, and that was an increase of only six per cent over the showing by liberal parties in the 1981 election. By contrast, thirty per cent of the white South Africans chose the Conservative Party—a clear indication that they want to go toward more restrictions on blacks.

President de Klerk declared that the election results were a "clear mandate" for "orderly reform." Just how clear the mandate was and how much reform the voters want remain questionable, given the fuzziness of the National Party's policy and the range of political views among the candidates elected. Those questions aside, the whites have indeed expressed their views. Now de Klerk has to address—and to attempt to satisfy—two other constituencies. One is South Africa's blacks. The other is the outside world: during the campaign, de Klerk declared forthrightly that one of his government's primary objectives would be to restore South Africa to its "rightful place" in the international community. To do that, he acknowledged, would require reform and change.

That there will certainly be reform and change under de Klerk is evident from his actions since the election. He has allowed peaceful demonstrations. He allowed the A.N.C., even though it is banned, to hold a rally in Soweto. He has released several prominent political prisoners, including Walter Sisulu, who was jailed with Mandela in 1964. He has also met with Mandela and with Archbishop Tutu. He has said that the beaches and other public facilities should be open to all races.

It has been a bold and auspicious beginning, de Klerk moving further and faster on reform than nearly anyone had expected him to. But the moves so far have been relatively easy ones, compared with what remains of apartheid: the Group Areas Act and the Population Registration Act, for example. As long as people are classified at birth by race, the foundation of apartheid is in place no matter what the house it supports looks like.

And there is the matter of that fundamental democratic right—the right to vote. The South African writer Christopher Hope, in "White Boy Running," his book about the 1987 election, wrote, "Almost certainly it will be the last all-White election ever held." The same thing is being said about this year's election. In a television interview during the campaign, de Klerk was asked if this would be the last election from which blacks were excluded. The question seemed to bother him; he took a long drink of water before answering. "I think everybody, including me, would wish that that would be possible," he said. Then he equivocated. And, for all the excitement and hope generated by de Klerk's reforms since he became President, there has been noticeable silence on the fundamental issue of one man, one vote. —RAYMOND BONNER

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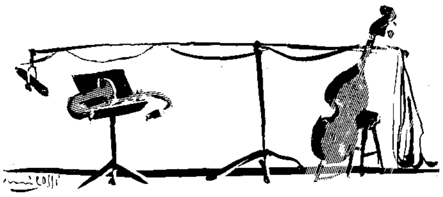
MUSICAL EVENTS

Early Music to Attending Ears

Les Arts Florissants, the Paris-based ensemble founded and directed by William Christie, takes its name from an "idyle en musique" by Marc-Antoine Charpentier. On a visit to New York this month, it presented a program of Charpentier's Advent and Christmas music in three different places: Columbia's Miller Theatre, Rockefeller University, and the sculpture hall of the Metropolitan Museum. I heard it in the first, and felt that in some ways I might have done better to stay at home and listen to the Arts Florissants recordings (on Harmonia Mundi) of the same pieces. The Miller Theatre, acoustically parched and unpleasingly shaped, no happy home for music, proved to be especially unsuited to choral music that should sing out into responsive spaces. On the other hand, each Arts Florissants performance is a new event, and the ensemble has changed during the years since the records were made. At the concert, there were new young voices to be heard, new personalities to admire. Mr. Christie is no routineer but an inspirer of and coöperator with carefully chosen and delicately trained groups of artists. Sometimes his forces are large: the Lully "Atys" that Les Arts Florissants put on at the Brooklyn Academy of Music earlier this year used over a hundred musicians, and the group's latest recording is of Purcell's big "Fairy-Queen," a performance based on the Aix production that I wrote about in August—without the actors, but now musically complete. The Charpentier pieces, however, could be compassed by an ensemble of thirteen: seven singers, two recorders, three viols, and (played by Mr. Christie) a harpsichord and a little organ.

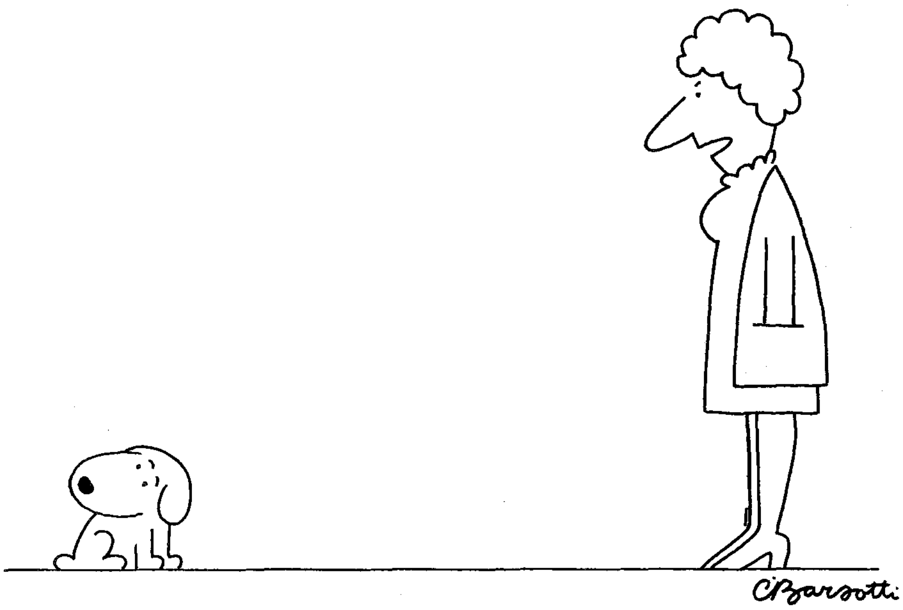
First, there was "Les Antiennes 'O' de l'Avent," Charpentier's setting of the exclamatory Great Advent Antiphons (No. 734 in the English Hymnal): "O sapientia," "O Adonai," "O radix Jesse," etc. Each of them belongs to a different pre-Christmas day. Heard in sequence, they form a remarkable, moving series of rapt apostrophes and urgent petitions: "O Key of David, and Sceptre of the house of Israel; that openest, and no man shutteth, and shuttest, and no man openeth: Come and bring the prisoner out of the prison-house, and him that sitteth in darkness and the shadow of death." Advent, people tend to forget, is—or was—a season of penitence, not of rejoicing. But Charpentier lightened the stern, beautiful music with the promise of Christmas by coupling to each antiphon a noël, an instrumental arrangement of one of the Christmas carols from which his popular Midnight Mass is built. This part of the program closed with his three-voice Magnificat, an exuberant tour de force over a four-bar bass (G, F, E-flat, D) eighty-nine times repeated.

The second half was the "Pastorale sur la Naissance de Notre Seigneur," composed for the Duchess of Guise, whose maître de musique and haute-contre Charpentier was. H. Wiley Hitchcock, in his Charpentier catalogue, classifies the pastorale among "theatrical works," and he dates it somewhere between 1683 and 1685. Those were bad years for France. The work begins with a scene of shepherds lamenting in strong language: "High time that you appeared, O Lord; no one observes your divine laws. . . . The reign of sin passes in front of your eyes, the longer man lives the more he goes astray." An aged shepherd suggests, and the others agree, that "after the racket and the glitz [*le bruit et l'éclat*] of changing monarchies" things may be looking up. The angel herald appears, dispatches the shepherds toward Bethlehem, and summons a celestial choir, whose "Glory to God in the highest . . . And peace on earth" forms a radiant center to the work. The shepherds approach the manger with very human reactions: "How cold He must be in this drafty place, with the snow outside. . . . No, the breath of the animals keeps Him warm. . . . That's not enough!" (Since, for musical reasons, the theatre's noisy heating system had been turned off—along with the lights that would have made the libretto easier to follow—in one respect, at least, the shivering audience enjoyed an ambience matched to the music.) The angel reappears, and shepherds and angels join in praise of the newborn God, in both the high style—comparing the night of radiance to the most resplendent day—and the humble ("The gold of your blond braids never gleamed as brightly as does Jesus in his cradle"). The pastoral spans a wide range: Virgil's Phyllis, Corydon, and Tityrus seem to blend with the Biblical shepherds, and they, in turn, with Charpentier's real-life countrymen, while the angel consort throws a glory over all. A program note mentioned the three aims of rhetoric—*movere*, *delectare*, *docere*—and affirmed Charpentier's ability to use the first of them, stirring, as the agent of delight and instruction. His music, like Rameau's, calls for intentness on the part of performers and listeners alike.



The singers were the soprano Monique Zanetti, the haute-contre Gérard Lesne, and the bass Jean-François Gardeil, the Jonathan, David, and Saul in the Arts Florissants recording of Charpentier's opera "David et Jonathas"; the soprano Véronique Gens and the tenor Bernard Loonen (of excellently distinct utterance), who take small roles in that set; and the soprano Noémi Rime (tall, dark-toned, dramatic, a Mélisse in "Atys") and the bass François Fauché. The recorder and the viol playing was expressive and impeccably tuned. It is rare—except from this company—and wonderful to hear Baroque performance at once so technically accomplished and so communicative. Next time Les Arts Florissants visits New York, it must be more worthily housed: the city has many churches whose acoustics and atmosphere would enhance such music, not be something to overcome.

One of them is the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, "Smoky Mary's," on West Forty-sixth Street—an Episcopal church of Gothic design, where ritual with all its trappings is retained more ceremoniously than in many of today's Roman temples. There the Tallis Scholars, the day before the Arts Florissants concert, presented a program of Renaissance music. The Scholars, founded twelve years ago by Peter Phillips, are an early-music success story. They have acclaim; a big repertory; their own record label, Gimell (with seventeen CDs in the latest *Gramophone* catalogue); and, so the program note told us, an annual "twelve-month world-wide touring schedule." This season's schedule includes two separate visits to New York. At the first of them, on a very cold night, St. Mary's was packed. The acclaim is deserved. The ten singers (four female sopranos, and two each of male altos, tenors, and basses) produce strong, shining, well-balanced, carefully tuned tones—excellently clear, and projected with easy, church-filling command. Their phrasing is supple, their rhythms are sure. Mr. Phillips directs performances that are animated and fluent but never hectic.



"Yes, I'm talking to you. I believe you're the only Sparky in the house."

The big work on the program was Thomas Tallis's seven-part Mass, in what was apparently its first New York performance. It survived only in fragmentary form until, in 1960, Joseph Kerman recognized new sources that made all but the Credo reconstructible. Jeremy Noble identified the cantus firmus as "Puer natus est nobis." David Wulstan and Sally Dunkley made a performing edition that both the Clerkes of Oxenford and King's College Choir have recorded. Tallis's "Puer natus" Mass, a composition of uncommon splendor, energetic in its details and majestic in its progress, was composed, it is presumed, for the combined chapels royal of England and Spain: Philip brought his singers along when, with a great retinue, he came to England to wed Queen Mary. The marriage took place in Winchester, in July, 1554. In November, England's formal submission and reconciliation to the Roman Church provided another occasion for solemn celebration. (At much the same time, Parliament was advised that the Queen was pregnant; Mr. Noble suggested that this might have prompted the choice of cantus.) So grand a composition calls for more than ten voices, but the Scholars sing so bravely and well that the scale seemed large, and a small chorus is usually more precise and true than a big one. The other pieces were Marian in a more usual sense: Salve Reginas by Obrecht and Lassus, Ave Marias by Philippe Verdelot and Victoria, and a choice clutch of early carols.

Jean-Philippe Rameau is a strange and marvellous composer. He was fifty, and known as an organist and a theorist, when he produced his first opera, "Hippolyte et Aricie," in 1733. He went on to write some twenty more full-length pieces and several one-acters. Most of them were successful, although the last, the breathtakingly beautiful "Les Boréades," had to wait until 1975 for its first performance. Rameau, a thorough, pertinacious musician who left nothing to chance, was not always admired: Johann Mattheson, Handel's friend, called him "an infatuated, pedantic, and affected imitator of Lully"; Gluck is said to have exclaimed, on hearing his first Rameau opera, "It reeks of music." Yet that music has an extraordinary power not merely to please but to stir and excite: a few bars in a dance, perhaps in simple three-part wind writing, can suddenly seem one of the loveliest and most important things in the world. Cuthbert Girdlestone, in his pioneering study (1957) of Rameau, wrote of the composer's grace, his liveliness, and his sadness:

> His music is not only intensely moving; it is also profoundly human, and its greatness, in the last resort, lies therein. . . . He is the first French composer to enter with all the force and sympathy of his imagination into the hearts of his characters and the situations he depicts. His power of dramatic imagination is comparable to Racine's.

Only that "first" need be disputed today, now that Charpentier's "Médée" has been rediscovered. Girdlestone concluded, with regret, that, "except for the favour of an occasional broadcast, most of us will never come to know Rameau otherwise than from a vocal score and a keyboard," but he underestimated the reanimatory zeal of our day. In a preface to the 1969 Dover reprint of the book he could add, "Performances of Rameau's stage works have become less uncommon."

"Hippolyte et Aricie," absent from New York for thirty-five years, was revived last month by James Richman's Concert Royal, for two performances in Merkin Hall's On Original Instruments series. They were concert performances, and they were given with forces smaller than any Rameau could have had in mind, but they offered a powerful and affecting dramatic adventure. The title roles were taken by Howard Crook and Ann Monoyios—an Atys and Sangaride in the BAM "Atys." He has an imaginative, captivating way with phrases; one might call him a Fernando De Lucia of early music. She sang so exquisitely that the abridgment of "Quels doux concerts" and of the famous "Rossignols amoureux" (originally assigned to a shepherdess), even if it was countenanced by the composer, was hard to bear. Nancy Armstrong may not have the dark tones of tragedy in her voice, but to the great role of Phaedra (which Janet Baker and Jessye Norman have sung in our day) she brought character

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and feeling. Jan Opalach delivered Theseus' three invocations of Neptune with passionate yet disciplined rhetoric; emotion and intelligence compensated for a lack of stylistic and technical certainty such as he might gain from a spell of working with Mr. Christie. Theseus is music drama's first full-scale tragic hero (Handel's Saul was six years in the future)—unless that claim be made for Charpentier's Saul. The numerous smaller roles were for the most part well taken. The weird, chilling Trio of Fates whose enharmonic modulations defeated Rameau's 1733 singers was deftly voiced by Steven Rickards, Tony Boutté, and Frank Nemhauser. And Mr. Richman, despite his gesticulatory demeanor at the harpsichord, has never before seemed to me so vital, various, and unplodding a conductor. True, this was not ensemble Baroque performance as carefully rehearsed, finely tuned, fully furnished, and polished in the presentation of the passions as that of Les Arts Florissants. How could it be? The subsidy for which Concert Royal thanked the Grand Marnier Foundation (making possible one of the two performances), the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation ("its grant in the National Period Instrument Orchestra program"), and the New York State Council on the Arts ("general operating support") was no doubt far less than that enjoyed by Les Arts Florissants, which is funded by the French Ministry of Culture, the Regional Council of Aquitaine, and La Fondation Société Général pour la Musique. But on the local scene this spirited, ambitious "Hippolyte" was a highlight. The evening was musically more rewarding than any I have spent this season at the Met.

THE Metropolitan Opera Guild has produced an attractive Christmas record, "A Met Messiah," on sale at the Lincoln Center shops or through the Guild. It is an anthology of "Messiah" recordings made by Met artists from 1896 to the present. The accompanying booklet reproduces the bill for a 1902 "Messiah" at the Met with Johanna Gadski, Louise Homer, Andreas Dippel, and David Bispham, "together with the ENTIRE METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE ORCHESTRA and a Chorus of 600 . . . under the direction of Mr. Walter Damrosch." Three of those soloists (not Dippel) are represented on the disk; manners of Handelian performance range from the amplitude of that day to the economy of a "Hallelujah" chorus recorded last year by a chorus of thirty-two and the English Concert, conducted by Trevor Pinnock. The earliest number is Herbert Witherspoon's forthright and forward "The trumpet shall sound" (1909). Witherspoon, who was born in Buffalo in 1873 and made his Met début in 1908, is in the line of secure, steady, verbally incisive American basses and baritones that is traceable in record history back to Bispham, who was born in Philadelphia in 1857 and made his Met début in 1896. Bispham's "Why do the nations" (about 1911) is direct and splendid. Margaret Matzenauer, who made her Met début in 1911, sings "Then shall the eyes of the blind . . . He shall feed his flock" (1925) with rich, rock-steady deep tones and verbal vividness. Gadski, who takes over in "Come unto him" (1916), is short-breathed but powerful and fervent. Anna Case, who made her Met début in 1909, contributes a diamond-bright "Rejoice greatly" (1922). (Collectors should know that this is a different "take" from the one reissued in Volume II of "The Record of Singing.") All the early singers combine energy of verbal declamation and solid, formed technique with effortless, unpushed grandeur. From more recent times, Marian Anderson's "He was despised" (1930) is opulent but a shade heavy. Richard Crooks' "Comfort ye, my people" (1942) is strongly declaimed, with a lovely "melt" on the word "pardonèd." The voice sounds fiercer in this transfer—more imperative than consolatory—than I remembered; Crooks no doubt recalled the original meaning of "comfort." Eleanor Steber's "I know that my redeemer liveth" (1951) begins plainly but rises to shining affirmation. Eileen Farrell's "There were shepherds" (about 1958) is fresh and delicate. The greatest singing of all is Jon Vickers' in the long sequence "Thy rebuke has broken his heart . . . Behold and see . . . He was cut off . . . But thou didst not leave his soul in hell." It was recorded in 1959, with Beecham as the conductor, and it is overwhelming. Such conjunction of words, tone, and feeling represents the art of singing at its most potent—enough in itself to make the CD worth buying.

—ANDREW PORTER

THE CURRENT CINEMA

Pulling the Rug Out

Isaac Bashevis Singer sold his novel "Enemies, A Love Story," a movie was made of it, and he still possesses it—that's a novelist's dream. Singer constructed a post-Holocaust sex farce with three passionately jealous women in love with a stealthy, guilt-ridden man. It's about refugees who are lost, who go on living in New York and chasing each other into bed after they've vanished from their lives. The director, Paul Mazursky, has gathered a superbly balanced cast and kept the action so smooth that the viewer is carried along on a tide of mystical slyness. It's overwhelming.

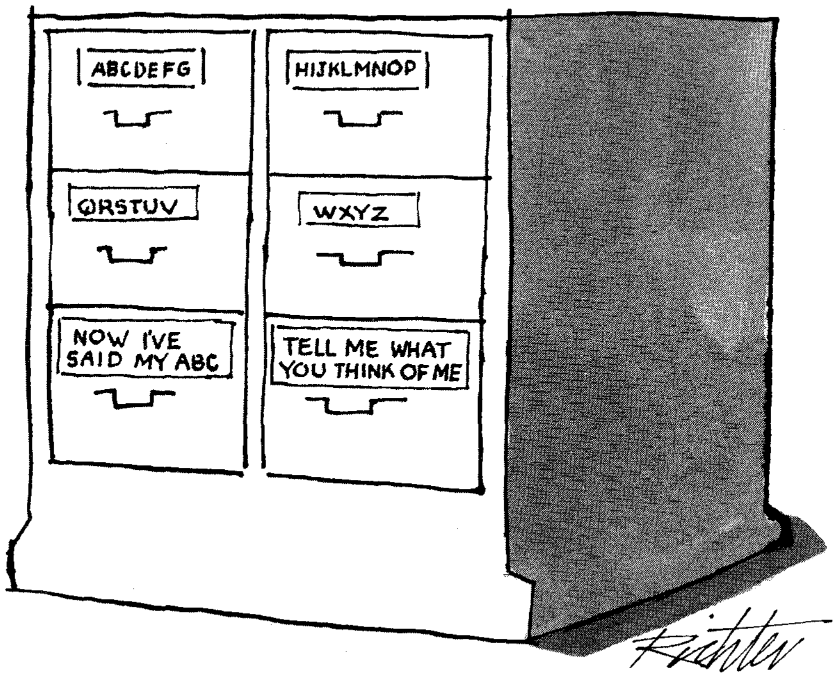
Ron Silver is quiet, self-effacing Herman Broder, a middle-class Polish Jewish intellectual who survived the Holocaust by hiding in a hayloft for three years; Yadwiga (Margaret Sophie Stein), a Gentile peasant who had been a servant in his family, risked her life to take care of him. When the war was over and he learned that his wife and children were dead, he married the sweet goose Yadwiga out of gratitude (and maybe a little lust) and brought her to New York with him. Now it's 1949. Herman and his devoted slavey Yadwiga live in Brooklyn, with a window overlooking the Wonder Wheel at Coney Island. He works as a ghostwriter, turning out sermons and books for a celebrity-lecturer rabbi, but he tells his wife he's a book salesman; that gives him an excuse to be away from home. He keeps another residence, in the Bronx, with his hot-tempered mistress, Masha (Lena Olin), a survivor of the camps. Herman lives in fear; he's still in hiding. But when he makes love to Masha he forgets the terrors of the past. It's the only time he forgets.

Herman invents dangers, and not only because he's anxiously trying to cover up his double domestic arrangements. The guardedness, the secrecy, the guile are all necessary to him; they're his strategy for survival. He was furtive even before he was traumatized by the Holocaust. It's part of Herman's passive nature to lie, rather than to risk showdowns. He can't make decisions; they have to be forced on him. He doesn't even initiate the almost constant sexual activity he's involved in; women keep jumping his bones, and he acquiesces. He doesn't want to give up his shining-eyed, pug-nosed Yadwiga, who looks after him as if he were a lord, and he certainly doesn't want to give up the wild, teasing Masha, whose sexy voice is enough to fog his senses. When she thinks she's pregnant and threatens to leave him if she has to have an abortion, he marries her, too. And when his first wife, Tamara (Anjelica Huston), who was shot and left in a pile of corpses but dragged herself to safety, and has been in a camp in Russia, arrives on Manhattan's Lower East Side, he doesn't want to give her up, either. He would like to remain a trigamist. Who can blame him? Ron Silver makes Herman's predicament understandable. And Herman is understandably terrified of hurting anybody.

Herman conceals basic information about himself from the rabbi who employs him; he conceals different things from each of the three women. Then, at a lavish party given by the rabbi, Herman's worlds collide, and he's confused about what he's hidden from whom. It's a situation out of a classic boudoir farce, but Herman and his three wives—Tamara, the witchlike, seductive mother figure, with black-dyed hair; Yadwiga, the natural-blond child; Masha, the lover, with thick, dark, reddish hair—are not the characters we're accustomed to seeing in Frenchy bedrooms.

It's a central joke of the material that Herman and his Jewish wives, Tamara and Masha, who all suffered as Jews, are intellectually sophisticated nonbelievers but are emotionally half-believers. (They abuse God the Sadist, who put them in the hands of the Nazis.) The only practicing Jew is the simple Yadwiga, who has become a convert in order to be a dutiful, pious wife to Herman and bear his child. Yadwiga and her efforts to be Jewish are a source of amusement to Tamara and Masha. (In a moment of stress, Yadwiga forgets herself, and makes the sign of the cross.) Tamara and Masha can't help being Jewish. For them, it's not a matter of religious faith; it's a matter of memories, and of being lost. In their nightmares, they're still in Poland. When they wake up, they're in limbo.

Anjelica Huston's Tamara feels dead because her children are dead (though they return in her dreams and that invigorates her); she's a strong, capable woman, with an erotic aura, an accented, Garboesque voice, and knowing, sidelong glances. She takes over a shop specializing in Judaica—books, ornaments, ritual artifacts—and she holds Herman's life together. Lena Olin's Masha, who lives with her hyperemotional mother (Judith Malina), quarrelling and making up, both of them constantly in a state of nerves, is diabolically willful. She lives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TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK OF ME

on tea, cigarettes, and liquor, and keeps Herman in torment with her hysterical threats that she'll go away and he'll never see her again. Masha is educated and smart, but she works as a cashier in a cafeteria; she has no connection with her job, her environment. She barely notices what country she's in, yet she lives intensely in the present, and pulls Herman into it with her. She's all id; she's part Angel of Death.

Ron Silver's owl-faced Herman, with his wise, sneaky expressions, may seem an unlikely pivot for this sex comedy—he doesn't quite have the spoiled-Jewish-prince narcissism to attract these women—but the more you see of him the funnier and more likely he becomes. Herman has fear and irony in his face, and you can read his thoughts, if you ever get around to noticing him. If you lift up the brim of his brown fedora, there it all is. This ghostwriter to a rabbi (he's also the ghost of the scholars he's descended from) may sometimes pray, but he only believes in lust and hiding. Singer puts it simply:

> At moments when Herman fantasized about a new metaphysic, or even a new religion, he based everything on the attraction of the sexes. In the beginning was lust.

And following close upon that is his obsessive, prurient hunt for evidence of sexual betrayal; he can't bear the possibility that any of his three wives has ever been unfaithful to him—he schemes and wheedles to find out.

There's no special pleading or self-pity in Mazursky's view of the characters—not even in his view of ghostly Herman. These refugees who go on living after they've died retain their petty follies in an exacerbated form. When Herman first sees Tamara after the gap of years in which their children have been slaughtered, he says, "I didn't know you were alive," and she complains, "You never knew." The movie is full of jokes, such as the moment in a subway station when Herman, who has been commuting to the rabbi's place and from one domicile to another, can't trust his instincts and has to pause before mounting the steps to Brooklyn, the Bronx, or Manhattan. Herman's love life is a map of poor-Jewish New York, and when he goes to the rabbi's apartment, on Central Park West, he climbs the social ladder. The loud, big-hearted rabbi (Alan King) is the picture of happy assimilation. He would like to help Herman make his way in the city; he doesn't understand that Herman is a Jewish Bartleby the Scrivener and can't be helped—he has to recede, fade away, flee.

The plot suggests a tragicomic opera, yet Mazursky's tone is even-tempered, restrained. There's nothing aseptic about this restraint—it has its own deeply crazy turmoil. But restraint is not what we've come to expect from Mazursky. He has always adored the show-biz tradition of turning your own emotionality into something brazenly entertaining. Here he's warm and sensual without being showy; he seems fulfilled. The characters go in circles, getting themselves into sex in order to forget other things and then waking up back where they were. Mazursky pulls the rug out from under us, and we drop through the farce.

The movie is richly satisfying; it's an act of homage to a world-class comedian with a dirty mind of genius. Singer himself is a ghost who writes: "Enemies," which came out in English in 1972, was his first novel set in America, and was, of course, written in the ghost language Yiddish. The minor characters—Malina as Masha's mother, Mazursky as the husband Masha must get rid of in order to marry Herman, Phil Leeds as Pesheles, the gnomish blabbermouth who reveals Herman's secrets at the party—seem to have folk roots in Singer's world. And Lena Olin gives Masha a feverish urgency. Olin's Masha has lowdown prettiness and transcendent beauty. The performance is conceived with a different kind of verve from that of Olin's bowler-hatted Sabina in "The Unbearable Lightness of Being." Masha gives in to her impulses like a Dostoyevski heroine. Singer sums her up:

> Masha was the best argument Herman knew for Schopenhauer's thesis that intelligence is nothing more than a servant of blind will.

That's exactly how Olin plays her. Masha, with her irrational intelligence, is heated and bold in a way that gives the movie the demonism it needs. She and Tamara are both glinting-eyed sirens, but Masha is Herman's chief sexual enemy. She justifies his need to hide. The soundtrack features klezmer—a band with a clarinet (played here by Giora Feidman), trumpets, a snare drum, a bass drum, and a guitar or balalaika, performing a type of medieval Jewish party music. The sound has a whirling, brassy plangency. It's plaintive yet pitiless—it goes with the Wonder Wheel and Masha's tarty walk.

THE surprise of the director Bruce Beresford's movie of Alfred Uhry's much honored play "Driving Miss Daisy" is that it's been "opened up" just enough to satisfy our curiosity and make things seem natural, without impairing the structure—which is still a series of two-character sketches. There are a few dead spots at the beginning, when the camera loiters in Miss Daisy's house and we seem to be asked to observe how quiet life was for the tasteful rich in Atlanta in 1948, but after ten minutes or so the film finds its rhythm, and the spacious house, with its fine woodwork and interior archways, becomes a character—it has a presence. (And it helps to make Miss Daisy's economic security palpable.) I prefer the movie to the stage version, which felt too mild and sincere and messagey; it's an ingratiating play about race relations—what the theatre had been waiting for. Uhry, who did the screen adaptation, seems to have pared away a little flab. And the movie, by bringing the characters close up, creates a stronger emotional involvement. The material is full of manipulative bits—it's virtually all manipulative bits—but Beresford understands how to work them while cutting down on their obviousness. He gives them a light, airy texture; he sets them in the sun.

Jessica Tandy is tightfisted, suspicious Daisy Werthan, a Jewish widow of seventy-two who's determined to do things her own way. She drives her own way, and wrecks her shiny new Packard. No insurance company will give her coverage, so her son, Boolie (Dan Aykroyd), who runs the cotton mill started by his father and grandfather, suggests she hire a chauffeur to drive her new Hudson. She has a black housekeeper (Ester Rolle), whom she's been pleased with for many years, but she's outraged at the idea of adding to her household: she doesn't want her privacy invaded, and she regards servants as probable thieves. Seeing her trapped in her house by her contrariness, Boolie disregards her wishes and hires a black chauffeur, Hoke Colburn (Morgan Freeman), a widower about a decade younger than she is. Boolie arranges to pay Hoke's salary (in order to block her claim that a chauffeur would be a waste of her money) and sends him over. But Boolie, a relaxed Jewish good-old-boy Southerner, plump and content, can't persuade his mother to accept the driver as part of her household. It's up to Hoke to win acceptance. And so we have the entertainment of watching the dignified, shrewd Hoke use all his wiles on this anxious, straight-backed old biddy, courting her day after day. At first, she ignores him; then she rebuffs him. She spurns his efforts to make himself useful about the house and the garden. He's deferent and patient, saying "Yes'm" when she puts him down. (He says other things under his breath.) And finally, after six days, his well-mannered persistence wins out. She lets him drive her to the Piggly Wiggly (and pecks at him every inch of the way). That's only the first step in her acceptance of his services; he goes on courting her for twenty-five years.

The movie is the story of the companionship that develops between these two: the thrifty former schoolteacher, who grew up poor and still sees herself as poor, and the illiterate, proud, handsome Hoke. Their story is touched by the changes in Southern life during the years they spend together; the movie ends in 1973, covering the time of the civil-rights movement, and that's more than incidental. But the two are not representative figures. The movie is essentially about how Hoke changes Miss Daisy. Their relationship becomes closer and deeper, and as she ages and becomes more vulnerable and fearful she comes to accept him as her best friend.

The movie is really built. Uhry knows how to make the developments comic: he's got this huffy, ornery woman to play everything off. As Jessica Tandy's Miss Daisy becomes older and more dependent on Hoke, she seems to undergo a spiritual transformation: her skin becomes translucent, she looks poetically frail. But she doesn't go soft: she's as sharp-tongued and bossy as ever. I've seen Jessica Tandy in many movies, going back to

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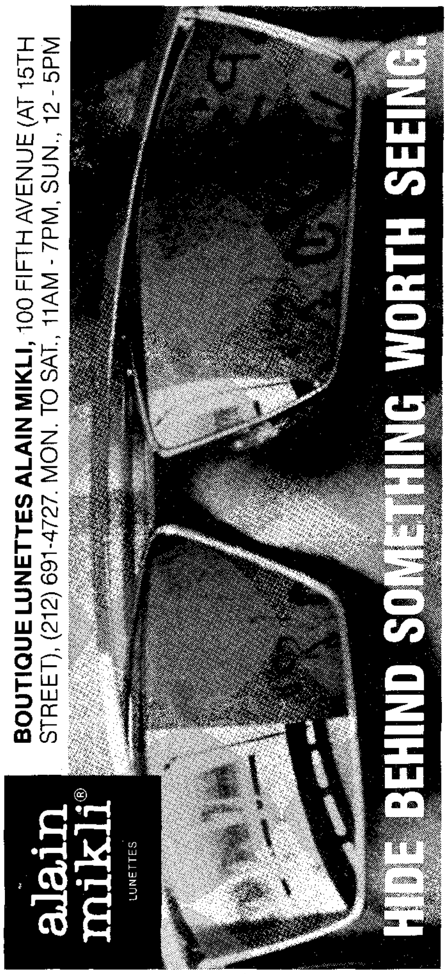

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her American début, in 1944, in "The Seventh Cross," and she has never been as lovely and varied as she is here, at eighty, playing Miss Daisy, from seventy-two to ninety-seven. She's more subtly comic now, and she risks more; the very old Miss Daisy has the grin of a gamine. The role (based on Uhry's grandmother, with a few great-aunts thrown in) gives her a chance to show glimpses of what she's learned in a lifetime of acting, and she has the simple assurance to hold us in her palm. It's a crowning performance; Miss Daisy is convincingly likable and impossible.

As Daisy's son, Dan Aykroyd sounds more Southern than she does, and this feels right. By temperament she's not a relaxed drawler, like Boolie; she speaks like the prim schoolmarm she was. Aykroyd's Boolie is a man of great forbearance: he has to be, to get along with his mother and with his social-climbing, fanny-twitching wife, Florine (Patti LuPone, in a vital, funny caricature). Boolie is an easygoing onlooker; he enjoys watching Hoke break down his mother's stubbornness. This may be the first time Aykroyd has stayed within the limits of a screen character that wasn't shaped for his crazy-galoot style of comedy, and, with the help of a first-rate aging specialist, who thickens him, he handles the twenty-five-year span like a veteran charmer. He's quite wonderful as the humorous, unheroic Boolie; maybe the company he was in inspired him.

Morgan Freeman is a master of irony. The role of Hoke isn't written with the fullness that went into Daisy; chances are that Uhry didn't get to observe as many sides of his grandmother's chauffeur (on whom the character is modelled). But the Memphis-born Freeman—the one Southerner of the three (Tandy is from London, Aykroyd from Canada)—fills in the character from what he knows of Southern blacks' verbal styles of accommodation and of self-amusement. Tandy partners him flawlessly; their performances achieve a beautiful equilibrium. But it's his movie. We identify with Hoke—with his carefulness, his reserve. We feel the slight tension in his not being able to express himself directly. The speed and power that Freeman has shown in other roles are kept out of sight here; instead we get the low, resonant voice (with high notes when he's harried), the inflections of his "Yes'm," and wit in every line of his body. He's playing the most courtly and dependable of black servants of an earlier era, yet he keeps us aware that this man is never servile; Hoke is always measuring the distance between white Southerners and himself.

When Hoke has his job interview with Boolie, he tells him that he likes working for Jewish people, and gradually we see why. Miss Daisy is stiffly defensive on race issues; she claims to be free of prejudice. But she frequently senses her own vulnerability to insult, and she feels a bond with Hoke. (She detests her daughter-in-law, who doesn't know how to treat servants—i.e., doesn't understand what's due them.) The movie is about the love between blacks and whites (Jewish division) at a time when a wealthy Southern Jewish matron plays mah-jongg, is addressed by her servants as Miss Daisy, and eats alone in the dining room even after she has become an advocate of civil rights. It's a time when a man like Hoke goes on weighing his words to the end of his days.

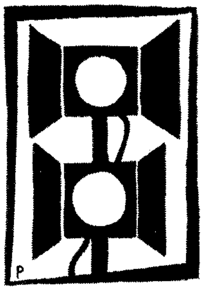
The movie gives us an insight into the author's background that we didn't get from the play, but it's still a rigged view of the past. The black man is made upright, considerate, humane—he's made perfect—so that nothing will disturb our appreciation of the gentle, bittersweet reverie we're watching. Yet there's a memorable unstressed moment when the radio in the sunny house carries the sound of Gabriela Benackova singing the numinous "Song to the Moon," from Dvořák's opera "Rusalka," and we get a sense of how lonely and empty Miss Daisy's life is. And after the housekeeper dies (at work in the kitchen) Miss Daisy, Boolie, and Hoke sit together on a bench at the funeral; they listen to Indra A. Thomas and the Little Friendship Missionary Baptist Church Choir (of Decatur, Georgia), and maybe they're thinking, like you, that it's worth dying to have singing like that. The bursting forth of sensuality in that church, while Miss Daisy sits pale and pinched, is part of the (blessedly) unspoken meaning of the movie. "Driving Miss Daisy" retains its coziness and its slightness, but it has been filmed eloquently.

—Pauline Kael

THE THEATRE

Heavenly City

“City of Angels,” a show about Hollywood in the forties, opens, in a sense, before it opens: the setting covers the right and left walls of the theatre, the Virginia, and lights up a moment or two before the overture begins. The audience is enclosed in this lively, funny musical for two and a half galloping hours. The pampered audience, I should say, for the sharp, satiric book was written by Larry Gelbart, the melodic jazz score was written by Cy Coleman, in the ingenious orchestrations of Billy Byers (touches of Ellington abound), and the laughter at Mr. Gelbart’s jokes is so continuous that it’s a wonder we can hear the tunes at all. The City of Angels is Los Angeles, of course, and the hero of the show is a writer named Stine (Gregg Edelman) who is adapting his thriller about a detective named Stone (James Naughton) for the movies. The plot, at times, is as difficult to track as any of Chandler or Hammett, on both of whom it is based, in a tongue-in-cheek way. The movie is being shot, stage left, in black and white, and while Stone is seduced, beaten up by a large man and a small one (universal sigh of recognition and longing for Sydney Greenstreet and Peter Lorre), incarcerated, left hanging by his wrists, and almost betrayed, Stine, stage right, is either pounding away at his typewriter or walking onto the set in glorious Technicolor and fending off his corrupt producer, going through the motions of social life in Beverly Hills, dealing with his wife in New York, and fighting self-betrayal as a writer. The attitudes are very much of the forties—all those writerly worries over squaring one’s conscience about “selling out” to the movies. Mr. Edelman is very good as Stine, and Mr. Naughton, as Stone, the gumshoe who is tough on the outside and gallant and moral within, is as near to perfection as makes no matter.



In the capable hands of Michael Blakemore, the English director of the wonderful “Noises Off,” the sometimes frenetic action is sorted out and made clear, and the performances are invariably right, and sometimes better than that. Randy Graff, doubling as a savvy secretary to Stone and the same to Stine, sings as well as she acts, and Mr. Coleman never lets her down. Rene Auberjonois is funny as the slimy producer (his may be the only character who does not double), Shawn Elliott is fine as a Hispanic character in the movie, and Dee Hoty and Kay McClelland, each in a couple of female roles, are good, too. Mr. Coleman’s songs are bountiful; just naming them serves no purpose, but my favorite is “You’re Nothing Without Me,” a duet for Stone and Stine. The songs’ lasting power, like that of Mr. Gelbart’s jokes, is, as always, a matter of guesswork, but at the time all one can feel is gratitude for a real score at last. The properly dazzling, not to say gaudy, period settings were designed by Robin Wagner and lighted by Paul Gallo; the properly dazzling period costumes were designed by Florence Klotz. Come to think of it, there was no dancing at all, but I never missed it. The Virginia, by the way, used to be the Guild Theatre, home to Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne, among other great stars, and to the plays of Robert Sherwood and S. N. Behrman, to name just a couple of irreplaceable dramatists. “City of Angels” proves a worthy tenant. —Edith Oliver

Double or Nothing

After more than thirty years spent living as a woman among men, I find that nothing men have to say (or feel they have to do) about women ever surprises me. Which is probably why I got such a kick out of the Shel Silverstein/David Mamet double bill at the Lincoln Center Theatre. Silverstein’s “The Devil and Billy Markham” and Mamet’s “Bobby Gould in Hell”—they opened December 3rd under the blanket title “Oh, Hell”—both seek to explore man’s moral nature, using the image of confrontation with the Devil. Both seem to suggest that an eternity in Hell is better than a lifetime spent with women. This, in itself, is not a new idea. From time immemorial, men have been trying to forge a link between women and satanic or infernal experience—at least as far back as Homer, whose Odysseus literally had to go through Hell to get home to his wife. My feeling about “The Devil and Billy Markham” and “Bobby Gould in Hell” was, basically, that Homer should be eating his heart out along with Dante, Milton, Marlowe, and George Bernard Shaw.

“Billy Markham” is a long narrative poem that sees life—specifically, human effort and aspiration—as a series of suckers’ games with the Devil. Written in the tradition of Robert W. Service (with a nod to Stephen Vincent Benét), it concerns a benighted country singer who doesn’t know enough not to play double or nothing. Performed with great showmanship and élan by Dennis Locorriere (late of the rock group Dr. Hook), it’s a little like a cross between a Grateful Dead song and Eddie Murphy’s “Raw,” and that’s pretty much all you can say about it without stealing Silverstein’s thunder, since the poem’s primary virtue lies in the way it builds. You can wonder at the excesses of Silverstein’s anarchic imagination set against the comparative discipline of his verse (particularly the way he deviates from his rhyme scheme in moments of heightened drama). You can note the curious relationship between “Billy Markham” and “The Devil and Daniel Webster,” whose title it of course echoes. Benét’s story, with its quiet, wry, thirties humor, offered a bookish comment on New England parochialism and American values. Silverstein’s epic is loud, coarse, vulgar, and shamelessly entertaining. The shamelessness is part of the point: Silverstein seems to want to offend (especially the women in the audience). But the combination of saltiness and sentimentality which characterizes “Billy Markham” seems also part of an attempt to outdo Benét by summing up all of American culture—America’s voice, its topography, its sense of justice and picture of Western civilization—as do the musical turns Silverstein has given Mr. Locorriere to perform, which run the gamut from Chuck Berry to the Methodist hymnbook. You can play along with Silverstein, or you can choose to be offended. What you cannot do is describe “The Devil

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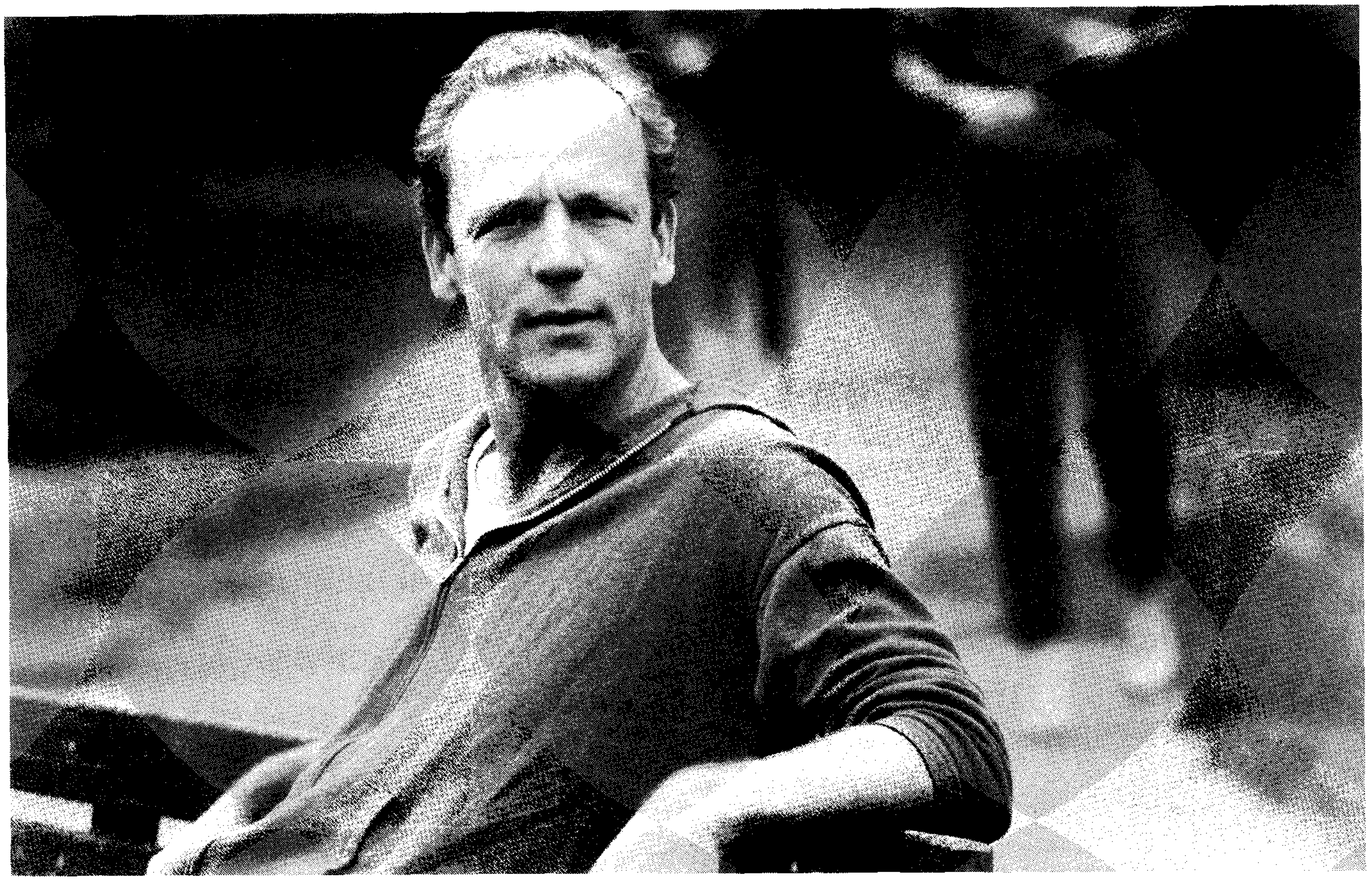
and Billy Markham" without in some sense diminishing it.

A juxtaposition of the ordinary with the outlandish lies at the heart of both Mamet's and Silverstein's humor. The movie they wrote together, "Things Change," was a Mafia thriller couched in the terms of a fairy story, and one naturally assumed that in the division of labor Silverstein—the songwriter, poet for children, and writer of whimsical one-act plays—had provided the fairy-tale element and Mamet the *noir* ambience. The most refreshing thing about "Oh, Hell" is the way each playwright seems to be working in the other's medium. After all, the world of pool halls and con games, where "Billy Markham" takes place, is Mamet's turf, just as obscenity has come to seem his special province. Nearly all the obscenity in "Oh, Hell" belongs to the Silverstein piece, all the whimsy to the Mamet. It's as though the two men had agreed to swap souls for a term. Mamet, for his Hell, chooses the comparatively sedate setting of a men's-club library (evoked by John Lee Beatty), and in contrast to Silverstein's Devil—all feces and fornication—Mamet's Interrogator seems almost missish: a fishing enthusiast (played with knock-you-dead style and panache by W. H. Macy), whose salient characteristics are a prep-school speech mannerism and a penchant for flamboyant sarcasm. Into this exclusively male environment—ruled by Macy and Steven Goldstein, as his sorely tried straight man and assistant—Mamet brings the hero of "Speed-the-Plow" and a woman he once treated badly (Felicity Huffman).

Mamet's Hell is a place for moral inversions: the Devil is a kind of Fisher King who wants to get Bobby Gould to admit to wrongdoing; Gould won't, because "it would not be right." And that's funny, in view of who Bobby Gould is, for Gould is in this play largely to stand for the archetypal Mamet hero: the man who is eminently criticizable by the lights of conventional morality (because he lies, cheats, steals, and blasphemes as a way of life) but whom we come to view as a sort of hero, either because his language charms us (the blasphemy-as-poetry syndrome) or because he does what he does so exceedingly well. The Mamet hero is a self-avowed crook, but he's honest about what he is; that's the one thing he's straight about—not being a



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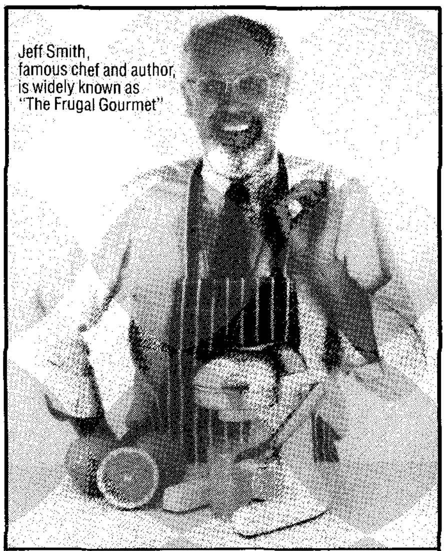

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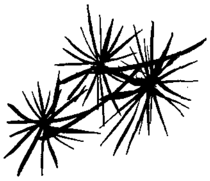
good man. Given Mamet's Shavian morality and his sense of tradition, it was a dead cert, really, that one of his heroes would wind up in Hell defending himself to a woman he'd wronged. For the purposes of "Bobby Gould in Hell," the title character is—like Shaw's Don Juan—the Common Enemy of Woman. He's Everycad, and that's what makes it so comical—such a brilliant casting and directorial coup on Gregory Mosher's part—to have Gould played here not by the wicked, swift, subtle Joe Mantegna (who created the character in "Speed-the-Plow") but by Treat Williams, with a look of dumb suffering and the demeanor of a dog who can't understand why he's been put out for the night.

The casting of Miss Huffman is equally sly. It was she who, replacing the rock star Madonna as the seductress-with-an-idea in "Speed-the-Plow," came close to turning it into a different play, not because of how Madonna performed but because of how she had been directed. Of the two styles of acting that Mamet fosters—the projection of a wild, idiosyncratic plausibility (Mantegna) and the complete absence of any defined persona (think of the flat, dead, toneless deliveries he elicited from Lindsay Crouse in "House of Games")—he and Mosher chose the latter for Madonna. In doing so, they turned the character into a blank. It didn't really matter that the woman never got her say: we didn't know who she was. Miss Huffman, having studied with Mamet and Macy, is schooled in the technique of projecting a plausible persona, and when she took over the role the woman became an ambiguity rather than a nonentity.



It mattered terribly then that "Speed-the-Plow" lacked what any respectable psychomachia should have—a confrontation between the two people fighting for Bobby Gould's soul. "Bobby Gould in Hell" is like the last act that Mamet never wrote for "Speed-the-Plow." In it he purports to do what you might call giving the bitch her due. Miss Huffman's character is, in its way, as generic as Mr. Williams': she is both the victim of a one-night stand and a woman whom Gould stayed around long enough to be doing her laundry. Mamet plays nasty tricks on her: he brings her onstage with hair unbrushed and bathrobe all unlaced, sports socks downgyved to her ankles, and carrying a toothbrush and a remote control; he makes her a medical assistant; he even (how shaming!) has her lose her train of thought in the middle of a Mametesque monologue. And, while he allows the woman's point of view a hearing, he actually puts it in the Devil's mouth. But he does give Miss Huffman a chance to tell Bobby Gould off, and after turning the ultimate female revenge fantasy into a misogynist's nightmare he brings Gould round to the point where, I think, most women would want to see the men about whom they have this particular dream. The tour de force is that he makes us echo the play's single blasphemy. In the second-to-last of a series of coups de théâtre (and this play uses every trick in the book), Mamet (with the help of George Schindler) makes Miss Huffman disappear in a blinding flash; but more impressive than any of the pyrotechnics is the fact that by the time he does we're guilty of the very thing that Bobby Gould has been put on trial in Hell for.

This latest play of Mamet's is a tour de force in a number of ways—not least because it seems to put paid to so many of the myths that have grown up around Mamet, among them the myth about endings ("Bobby Gould in Hell" has about five endings; every time you expect one of those abrupt, "Oh, well, I guess the playwright just fell over dead" resolutions, Mamet goes on, offering another perspective) and the idea that Mamet writes in the style he does because it's the only one he can handle. Of the three distinct sequences that make up "Bobby Gould"—the opening bit between the three men; the bit with the woman; and the last bit, after the woman goes—only two have the ring of a Mamet play. The middle, except where Miss Huffman is made to lose her place, is devoid of that slow, ponderous pattern of rhetorical question and Talmudic answer we have come to think of as Mamet's style.

So what I want to know is this: of the two worlds depicted in Mamet's play—the womanless world (where people talk like something out of a David Mamet play) and the real one, with woman (where people talk normally)—which is really Hell?

—MIMI KRAMER

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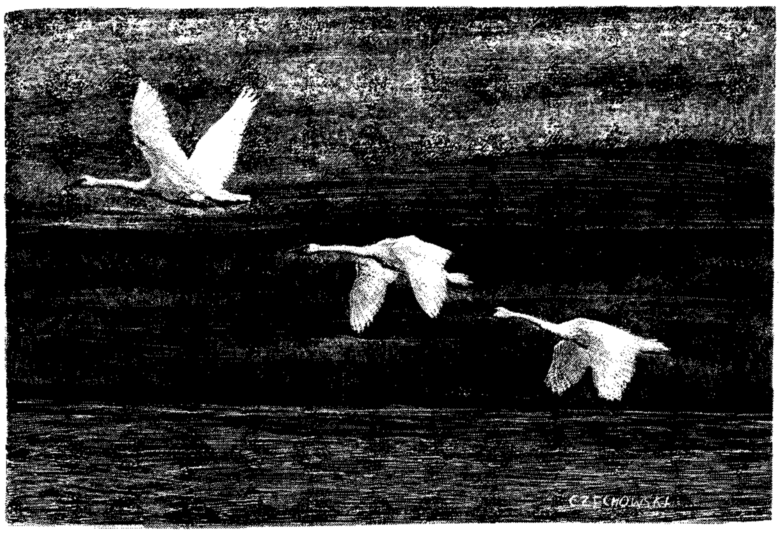


THE trumpeter swan, the world's largest, with a wingspan of eight feet, once ranged the entire continent of North America. Its farewell symphony began in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, when the Hudson's Bay Company started hunting the bird. In those days, it didn't take much hunting; scientists think that the bird nested and bred as far east as Newfoundland. The trumpeter's commercial value was substantial: its plumage and down were fashionable, and its quills became pens. (Audubon preferred trumpeter-swan quills for drawing fine detail.) The trumpeter vanished successively from the eastern United States, the Mississippi Valley, and the prairie states, and by the beginning of the twentieth century was thought to be close to extinction. In 1919, two pairs of trumpeters were found nesting in Yellowstone National Park, and in the next decade more were spotted. The bird had, after all, survived in the United States. Wild swans are migratory, but many of the Yellowstone trumpeters, it turned out, had ceased migrating. They clung all year round to a small area of high, rugged country where warm springs that feed the local streams usually keep some of the water ice-free through the winter. (Swans eat water plants.) Besides the park itself, the trumpeters' habitat included nearby patches of Idaho and Montana. In 1935, the United States Biological Survey, the forerunner of today's United States Fish and Wildlife Service, established the Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, in Montana's Centennial Valley, two miles north of the Idaho border, and it became a swan-nurturing center. In the nineteen-fifties, field workers from the Service discovered that a small, separate trumpeter population in Alaska had survived and was migrating southward along the Pacific Coast as far as Washington State. By 1960, when Winston Banko, who had managed the Red Rock Lakes Refuge, published "The Trumpeter Swan: Its History, Habits, and Population in the United States," the Rocky Mountain trumpeter population—flocks that winter in and around Yellowstone—was up in the four hundreds. In 1968, the Alaska population was estimated at three thousand, and the trumpeter was no longer considered threatened.

Between September, 1976, and April, 1979, however, Ruth Gale, a graduate student in wildlife biology at the University of Montana, who was studying the trumpeters for her master's thesis, confirmed what those who managed the Rocky Mountain swans already suspected—that even while the trumpeters' reëstablishment was being celebrated the birds were in danger again. From 1964 to 1968, the nonmigratory adult population had dropped twenty-two per cent, and through the nineteen-seventies these local swans failed to replace themselves. Ruth was awarded her master's, but, as she told me recently, "nobody pays any attention to graduate students," and the local trumpeters' existence grew more precarious during the nineteen-eighties.

I met Ruth, who is now a wildlife biologist on the staff of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, at the end of a quest that began on a December afternoon nine years ago, when my husband and I, driving aimlessly, turned into Cold Spring, a town on the east bank of the Hudson some fifty miles north of New York, and found its little harbor crowded with thirty or forty swans; a dock jutting into the harbor was filled with people admiring them. The Hudson at Cold Spring is narrow, and its west bank was a steep and undulating backdrop for the brilliant-white swans on the sparkling water. I had thought of swans as existing in a mixture of glitter, scrim, and footlights—as belonging to theatre, literature, art, and song—but the swans at Cold Spring were as real as cows, and so was their beauty. The scene was a vision of the world as one wants it to be: two species enjoying each other in the sunshine.

My husband and I returned to Cold Spring but never found the swans again. They were mute swans, I later discovered—members of a Eurasian species that was domesticated in the Middle Ages. Following the First World War, close to a thousand were imported to adorn American private estates and public parks. Many mutes, like the Cold Spring flock, have become feral.

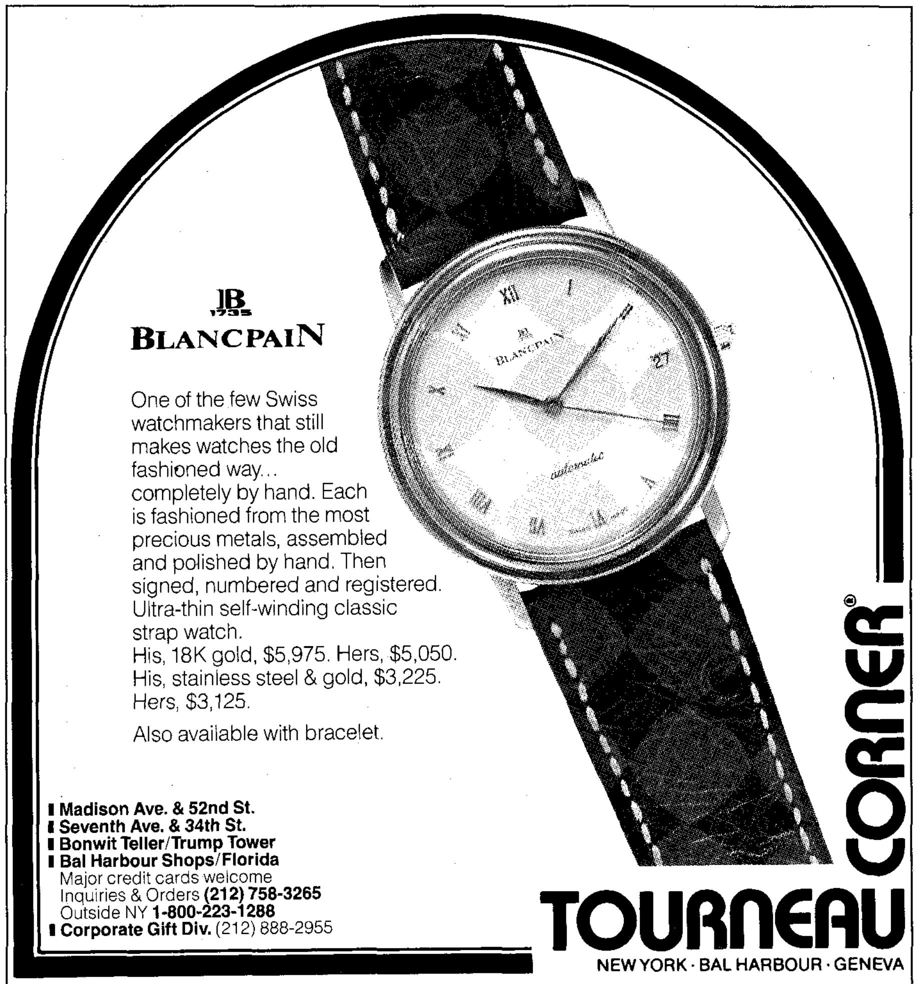
I wanted to see more swans, and I began reading about them to try to discover where they can be found. The literature for the lay reader is scanty, but I did learn that there is a black swan in Australia and a black-necked swan in South America, that all the swans of the Northern Hemisphere are white, and that the plumage of male and female birds is identical. Also that, depending on the species, swans have as many as twenty-five neck vertebrae. (A giraffe has seven.) And that swans, like other waterfowl, can feed in both fresh and salt water, because a pair of glands set into their skulls just above their eyes desalinates brine and they "weep" the salt from their nostrils. Some of the literature is baffling. North America's other native swan, the tundra, which used to be known as the whistling swan, nests near the Arctic Circle, and almost every volume I read mentioned that tundras migrating to

Chesapeake Bay sometimes rest on Lake Erie and are swept to their death over Niagara Falls. Some books cited figures as high as two hundred dead swans a season. I couldn't understand why, in all the decades I'd been reading newspapers, I had never seen a word about this catastrophe. Eventually, Susan Roney Drennan, a vice-president of the Audubon Society and the editor of its magazine, *American Birds*, told me that it doesn't occur as regularly as the books suggest. Another volume described a tundra swan trapped in the ice on the Detroit River, and that brought to mind the harrowing image of the swan struggling on the frozen lake in Mallarmé's famous sonnet. Ruth Gale said she'd seen that all too often. In any case, every book I read assured me that the trumpeter swan had been restored, and that its return was an unqualified success story.

LAST February, I started to look for trumpeters. Ms. Drennan told me to call Jay Sheppherd, a biologist at the Fish and Wildlife Service, and he told me to call Larry Gillette, who is the vice-president of the Trumpeter Swan Society, in Minnesota, and is working to establish a trumpeter flock in that state, and Mr. Gillette, in turn, told me to call Ruth Gale, in Idaho Falls. I did, and asked her if I could see a trumpeter swan—perhaps when the weather was warmer—and she said, "If you wait until April to visit, you can watch us fish the dead birds out of the river."

Her remark was the first hint I had that the Rocky Mountain trumpeter-swan population had, as Ruth went on to explain, "almost crashed" this past winter. "The crisis isn't over," Ruth said. "We've managed to keep from losing all the birds, but the survivors are terribly depleted, and we have to build them up for a thousand-mile migration." Ruth's mentioning migration confused me at the time, because the books I had read said that Yellowstone trumpeters don't migrate.

On a Friday early in March, I flew to Idaho Falls. That evening, Ruth and her husband, Joe, who is an engineer, came by my motel and took me to dinner. She is a blue-eyed blonde, about five feet seven, and her husband, who is tall and lanky, looms several inches above her. Joe Gale was born in California; Ruth is a transplanted Easterner, from Rutherford, New Jersey,



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who, as a college student, took a summer job in Yellowstone Park in 1971. "It dawned on me that you could get paid for doing what I wanted to do—working out-of-doors with wildlife," she said. "After I graduated, I worked in Glacier National Park and the Everglades for a couple of years—until I realized that if you really wanted to do something in wildlife you needed a graduate degree."

Ruth got her master's from the University of Montana in 1979, and she continued to study the Yellowstone trumpeters, for the Fish and Wildlife Service, through 1980. For the next three years, she worked for the Forest Service. In 1984, she began a collaboration on another three-year study of the Rocky Mountain trumpeter swans. This one was undertaken with the support—in fact, at the instigation—of the Fish and Wildlife Service; its purpose was to discover what was going wrong with a wildlife success story, and, if possible, to recommend new policies to preserve the swans. When the study was completed, Ruth went to work for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

On the evening we met, I hadn't wholly grasped that the trumpeters had just escaped disaster, and the Gales had difficulty realizing how little I knew. We bewildered each other throughout dinner. I mentioned my confusion about migrating Yellowstone trumpeters, and learned from Ruth that the Canadian Wildlife Service has been rebuilding Canada's trumpeter population, that those birds do migrate, and that the trumpeter flocks that nest and breed around Grande Prairie, Alberta; northeastern British Columbia; the Northwest Territories; and the Yukon all winter in the Greater Yellowstone area. In fact, she said, practically every trumpeter known to breed south of Alaska winters within a seventy-mile radius of the Henry's Fork, the northernmost of several rivers that flow west from the Rockies and join to form the Snake. Counting natives and migratory Canadians, the trumpeter population in the Rockies totalled seventeen hundred and ten last winter. About five hundred swans were on the Henry's Fork in the last week of January, when the water froze, and that flock was in danger of freezing.

Next, I discovered that in pursuit of a rare and beautiful bird I had clipped the corner of a political struggle, or,

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more accurately, an economic conflict—a dispute about the allocation of water, which is a scarce resource in eastern Idaho. Ruth told me that the waters of the Henry's Fork are regulated by the Island Park Dam, which stores water in the Island Park Reservoir. "The Bureau of Reclamation manages it for people who own water rights—for irrigation, mainly," she said. "The power companies sometimes complain that they don't get enough water. People here have a funny attitude toward wildlife. They think that they can turn off the water and somehow the swans and the fish will always be there. And a lot of people here don't take poaching seriously—they don't think it's poaching. And when you try to explain our predator program, and tell them that conservation *requires* predators, they think you're crazy. You're talking to people whose fathers or grandfathers just finished clearing the predators off their land. But then in a hard winter like this, when the deer and the elk come in and eat their hay, they're furious." She shook her head, and went on, "The irrigation season is April to November. In November, the Bureau of Reclamation decides what the winter flow will be. I argued that the Bureau was setting it too low, that a crash was just waiting to happen, but the people in Burley"—a town south of Idaho Falls, where the Bureau of Reclamation has its local headquarters—"were sure it would be all right. Last year, the river was just as low, but we got a warm spell. This year, we had a blizzard."

Ruth came by my motel at seven the next morning to take me to the Henry's Fork. She was driving a Fish and Game Department truck and was wearing her badge. We were going to drive some seventy miles to the north, she said, to Harriman State Park, a forty-seven-hundred-acre tract that the Harriman family had given to the state in 1977. The Henry's Fork flows through Harriman Park and the Targhee National Forest (the forest surrounds Harriman, and nestles against Yellowstone Park). The Rocky Mountain trumpeters' habitat comes under the jurisdiction of Idaho's Parks Department, of Idaho's, Montana's, and Wyoming's fish-and-game departments, and of the federal government's Fish and Wildlife Service, Park Service, Forest Service, and Bureau of Reclamation.

The road north from Idaho Falls runs through land that is high—the city itself is forty-seven hundred feet above sea level—and flattish, rolling away to hills or mountains. The plain of the Snake River was muffled in snow. The trees around the occasional farmsteads were bare willows and cottonwoods, and the only birds we saw were a few ravens and magpies. The light was pearly rather than sunny, and the landscape was white and gray, punctuated by blacks and browns. Nothing about this landscape was striking, except that—as is true everywhere in the West—there was so much of it. About two-thirds of the way to Harriman State Park, on the horizon to the right, three magnificent, jagged peaks appeared, rising like irregular pyramids or lopsided ziggurats; Ruth identified them as the Tetons.

Almost from the moment I boarded the truck, Ruth had been tutoring me, and she had begun at the beginning. "Trumpeters are long-lived birds," she said, adding that one trumpeter has lived thirty-two years in captivity, although the longest they live in the wild is about twenty-five. "Like other long-lived creatures, they pass along their experience to their offspring," she went on. "So when you kill these birds you're not just killing swans, you're killing their knowledge of migration routes and wintering areas. This is a poor wintering area for swans; its climate is too harsh. The only reason the birds could survive at all was the warm springs. But the climate was also too harsh for people. Nobody came here in the nineteenth century. When people killed the trumpeter swans that wintered elsewhere—the Gulf Coast, for example—they killed all the birds that knew those migration routes. The only trumpeters that survived those years of extermination were the ones that had learned the tradition of wintering in Greater Yellowstone. The Canadian Wildlife Service has been trying to expand the trumpeters' range, but every time it moves Alberta birds east, they come back here in the winter. That's their tradition. We've followed that tradition since the sixties. When I was working in the park, I would see the same swans on the same sandbank in the Yellowstone River every year in October. So the trouble with the species, to begin with, is that its distribution is all fouled up. The birds ought to be wintering in better places.

"When I decided to study the trumpeters for my master's, I'd already worked in the park, and I knew that something was going wrong. Our trumpeters weren't replacing themselves, and although the Canadian flock was growing, too many of its cygnets were dying here. Nobody was studying these birds. One of my professors tried to dissuade me; he said there weren't enough swans to get anything 'statistically valid.' He thought I should study ground squirrels. He was trying to help me. The university wasn't enthusiastic, either. Of course, most wildlife departments are geared to the species that are hunted. It's part of the way wildlife budgets are funded."

I remarked how strange it seemed that nobody had said a word—at least, to the public—about the trumpeters' peril.

"They're a kind of historical fluke," Ruth said. "The situation developed out of the history of a population that was reduced so that fewer than fifty adults were left in this area—a very marginal area. And they were thought to be the only ones, anywhere. It was a fluke when survivors were discovered in Alaska. But somehow the trumpeter swan became the symbol of our efforts to restore wildlife. It went from being considered in grave danger to being a wildlife success story. Then it kind of slipped into a black hole. It's a human attitude: we declared success, and it was too hard to turn around and say all was not well.

"In 1976, when I was just starting my study of trumpeters, somebody told me that the Trumpeter Swan Society was holding its fifth conference at Jackson Hole. I went over, and found a group of people who had worked with trumpeters at some time in their careers. All the swan researchers belong to the society. The group has existed since the late nineteen-sixties. They carried the ball. I hate to think where we'd be if it weren't for them. Everyone there was very keen, and afterward the Canadians invited me up to Alberta, and I worked for a few weeks there, banding swans. The Canadians were very happy to have me work with them, and they've been very supportive. Anyway, my work for my master's gradually expanded. At first, I was concentrating on the nesting season, but I found I had to follow the swans year round. After three years, I knew pretty well what had gone wrong, but it was our last report that proved it. Those birds are predictable, but we weren't. We'd been jerking them around for twenty years, changing the water, changing the food. Think of it! What have we got? Fifty, sixty, even seventy years of work on the species? We haven't got seventy years to work on every endangered species—we haven't got seventy years to work on the grizzly bear!"

THE land became slightly hillier, and the trees on either side of the road changed from willows and cottonwoods to lodgepole pines, the vernacular growth of the mountains. There were no more farms. Ruth pointed ahead to a rise, and said, "We're about to climb up on that plateau. The swans are restricted to high country. We'd like to push them south, to lower ground." Harriman Park, she explained, lies in a caldera—the crater of a dead volcano—encircled by a ridge. "The climate's much colder in there," she said. Our climb never seemed steep, but later, consulting maps, I discovered that the rim of the caldera is about sixty-five hundred feet above sea level, and that the caldera's floor, through which the Henry's Fork flows, lies at about sixty-one hundred feet. Because of the elevation, the spring and summer climate in the caldera is like the Yukon's. The sedentary birds have a shorter nesting season than the birds that nest in Alberta.

Ruth turned off the highway into the park, and followed a road that ran between walls of plowed snow. The park headquarters, a brown rustic structure, had about three feet of snow piled on its peaked roof. It looked like the baker's last gingerbread house, on which he had dumped all the leftover icing. Tacked to a wall in the entry was a poster asking anyone who saw a collared trumpeter swan to get in touch with the Canadian Wildlife Service. (Since the early fifties, the Canadians have put bright-colored plastic collars on their trumpeters, as well as bands around their legs.) Inside were a wood stove and a counter, at which the park sold trail mix, hot drinks, and wildlife publications. Ruth knew the ranger on duty at the counter, and several park staff members, learning that she was there, came from their offices to greet her. A young man in ski clothes who had been warming himself at the stove began to question her. I gathered from their conversation that in the winter of 1987 and again in the fall of 1988 Ruth had worked with both the Idaho Fish and Game Department and the Fish and Wildlife Service in attempting to persuade the swans along the Henry's Fork to leave the caldera for lower sections of the river. In 1987, she recruited skiers and snowmobilers to make noise along the river, and in November, 1988, Fish and Wildlife set up several Zon guns—automatic noisemakers used to scare wildlife—at the Henry's Fork. Normally, however, the swans' wintering area of the Henry's Fork was closed to the public, Ruth explained. This year, especially, it was essential not to disturb the birds while they were still so weak. "You spook them if they can see you," she said. "When I was there last, they didn't see me, but they could hear me, and that got to them."

Ruth introduced me to a tall, red-bearded young man named Jeff Snyder, a graduate student who had been studying the swans and who, since the crisis, had been caring for them day by day. Jeff said he'd be coming with us to the Henry's Fork. We went outside and walked through walls of snow to a garage area, where he had parked two snowmobiles. Ruth explained that the caldera was twelve miles in diameter and that our journey, following a roundabout route so as not to disturb the birds, would cover about five. Jeff led off. I rode pillion behind Ruth. We made our way back to the highway, crossed it, and began jolting across the floor of the caldera. The snow lay all around, interrupted by stands of lodgepole pines. Sometimes on our windings I saw Thurmon Ridge, the high wall of the caldera: it was covered with snow and dotted with lodgepole pines that looked black. On one turn, we passed an eroded wall of the caldera, and through it I caught sight of the three imposing Tetons. We passed a spring in a stand of pines. Ruth told me later that its temperature was about sixty degrees, and that it flowed into the Henry's Fork.

At last, we stopped on top of a rise. The Henry's Fork meandered into view around a tree-covered promontory at the left, curled around a snow-

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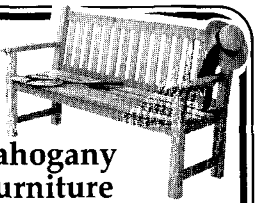

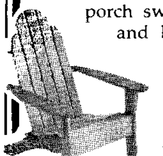

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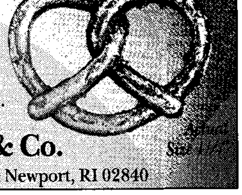

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covered projection on the opposite bank, and disappeared around another turn, covered with trees, to the right. I didn't see any swans until Ruth pointed them out to me. They were on the far side of the water, a little more than a quarter of a mile away, sitting on a wide, snow-covered field that sloped up toward a backdrop of forest. I focussed my birding glasses and saw ranks and rows of swans, more than I had ever imagined seeing, out on the hillside like spectators in a stadium. They sat on the snow as they sit on the water, their bodies resembling Viking ships. Ruth and Jeff were excited, but they talked in very low voices. "I've seen the flock on the Teton River do this, but this is the first time I've ever seen the Henry's Fork birds loaf on a snowfield," Ruth said to him, and she whispered to me that loafing—a technical term for waterfowl behavior that isn't anything else, such as preening or feeding—on a snowfield offers cygnets better protection than loafing on a stream, where overhanging banks and trees can conceal lurking predators. She and Jeff were delighted by the new behavior that the Henry's Fork swans had learned, and exchanged several pleased comments before they got down to business and started counting. (There were a hundred and nineteen or twenty swans.)

I merely gazed. The swans sitting on the snowfield illustrated the state that the pianist Artur Schnabel called "alertia"—at once aware and relaxed. Ruth whispered to me that they saw us, but that they felt secure, because the stream was between them and us. None of the swans looked distressed to me. The cygnets, which are a brownish-gray I'd call taupe except that "taupe" isn't in the naturalist's vocabulary, wriggled a bit, and the adults stirred from time to time, but not much. When they adjusted themselves and momentarily lifted their huge wings for balance, the gesture was lovely. The landscape was so expansive that the swans did not look especially big, but then I noticed that at the bend in the river to my left three swans—possibly dubious about the new style of loafing on land—were towering over a flotilla of ducks. I went back to staring at the swans basking on the snow, and slipped into something like their alertia while I listened to the silence. It seemed to me that the swans' gift of stillness enhanced their beauty. Suddenly, from my right, an eagle tore across the sky and vanished behind the trees on the promontory to the left. The ducks panicked. They started quacking hysterically and flying in all directions. Then they returned to the water, still quacking. The swans on the water didn't move when the eagle appeared—adult swans are too big to fear an eagle—but presently, perhaps annoyed by the ducks' unending hullaballoo, they rose a few feet into the air and glided to join the swans in the field. When they landed, they emitted their famous call. There is an extra loop in the trumpeters' trachea, which accounts for their astonishing voice. I had read countless descriptions of their call, but none had prepared me for the fact that it sounds exactly like a trumpet, not like anything you expect to hear from a bird. Trumpeter swans have several calls, and the one I heard, a greeting call, has a short-long rhythm to it, like syncopation. The trumpeters on the Henry's Fork sounded as if they were playing hot jazz on the snowfield.

On our way back, we stopped in the snow, and Jeff dismounted from his snowmobile and plodded off around some trees. "He wants to see if the swans have eaten," Ruth explained.

In a few minutes, he came back, his face radiant. "The grain's all gone," he said. "It worked."

Ruth said that no one had ever fed the swans on the Henry's Fork since it became parkland, but these birds were so depleted that they'd had to be fed. Jeff had telephoned the Red Rock Lakes Refuge, where the staff had been feeding swans in winter since 1935, and the people there told him that they put out grain in large concentrations every day, and so day after day Jeff had left big dumps (two or three hundred pounds) of grain in the river near where the spring emptied into it. Day after day, the Henry's Fork swans had refused to touch the grain. "Last Sunday, I borrowed a pair of my father's waders, and I went into the water and strewed the grain up and down the river," Jeff said. "Then I went away. I thought maybe my appearing every day was frightening them. So I stayed away from the Henry's Fork until today, and the grain's all gone."

At lunch in a café in the nearby village of Last Chance, I asked Ruth and Jeff to tell me about the crisis.

Ruth said, "We knew that a storm was moving south from Alaska. The last day of January—a Tuesday—was very windy in Idaho Falls, and over the next two days the temperature plummeted, but it didn't snow. It never snowed in Idaho Falls. Jeff was down there. When we found out what was happening, we tried to get through to the Henry's Fork, but they stopped us. On Sunday, we found the whole river frozen except for four little pools, where four or five hundred swans were huddled. We started picking up dead swans."

Ruth told me that as early as Thursday the owners of the irrigation water rights in the Island Park Reservoir had agreed to donate sixteen hundred acre-feet, and the power companies to release another five hundred. (An acre-foot is the amount of water required to cover one acre of land to the depth of one foot.) Furthermore, the owners agreed to sell enough additional water to keep the river open, and charged the going rate—two dollars and fifty cents an acre-foot. The Nature Conservancy, the Trumpeter Swan Society, and the Greater Yellowstone Coalition donated or pledged funds to a tax-exempt nonprofit organization, the Henry's Fork Foundation, to buy more water. Contributions came in from private citizens in the area and from Canadians around Grande Prairie. (However, since the reservoir filled to capacity by April, the owners didn't charge for the water.)

Ruth took pains to describe these financial arrangements, and she and Jeff both tried hard to avoid dramatizing the events of that hectic weekend. If they felt despair or anger at the loss of as many as a hundred swans (they couldn't make a precise count, because coyotes and eagles had eaten some carcasses), they were careful not to show it. What Ruth wanted to impress on me was Jeff's importance both in doing research and in rescuing the birds. She told me that he was working on a long-term study of ice formation on the Henry's Fork. "Now the Army Corps of Engineers is helping with the computer work," she said, adding that Jeff was not getting paid for his emergency-rescue work—that he was a volunteer.

Jeff smiled. "I'm a glutton for punishment," he said.

Ruth said, "When I finished my master's, I discovered that I was the expert on this flock. I thought you had to work all your life to become an expert, but in three years I'd learned more about the Rocky Mountain birds than anyone else. Now Jeff's the expert."

Jeff said that he was a graduate student in biology at Idaho State University, in Pocatello, and that he had been studying the swans for most of the past five or six years, taking time off to earn money. His advisers, like Ruth's, had tried to steer him to other species. One teacher suggested that he study magpies, another fish, and a third small mammals—perhaps ground squirrels. "I insisted on swans," Jeff said.

I could see that swans were not the fast track in wildlife biology, and asked them what was.

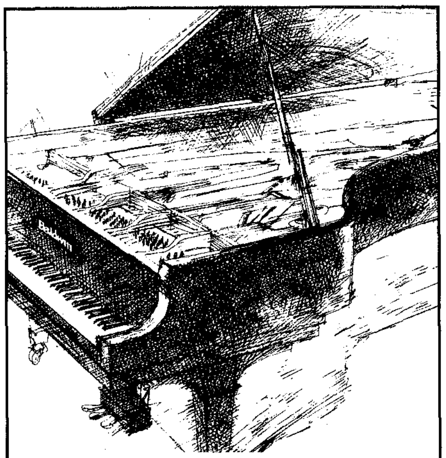
"There *is* no fast track in wildlife biology," Ruth said.

Jeff agreed. "I have a twin brother and a sister, and they're on fast tracks. They're not in biology—they're in computer programming. I started college as a business major, and quit after a semester and went to Pocatello, where they have an ecology program. My parents still don't understand what I'm doing."

Ruth and Jeff went on grumbling about careers, or lack of careers, in wildlife biology, but I didn't think they meant it. They struck me as people who had no choice; they had been seized by their vocation. Ruth said, "Jeff reminds me of my years as a graduate student, begging and borrowing. People who have a feeling for the animal, a feeling for the particular species, have to make sacrifices."

Before we headed back to Idaho Falls, Ruth wanted to settle the next week's schedule with Jeff. He planned to spend Sunday with the swans and to work in the laboratory in Pocatello on Monday and Tuesday, as he did most weeks. However, Ruth wanted him up on the Henry's Fork on Tuesday, because some television people from California had telephoned her to say that they were taping a story about the swans and hoped to visit the Henry's Fork. Jeff promised to be on hand.

ON the drive south, Ruth answered my questions about bird behavior concisely and good-naturedly, every once in a while interrupting my education to tell me a story. As we left Harriman State Park and drove



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through the Targhee National Forest, she recalled the Yellowstone fires. “One fire burned seventeen thousand acres of Targhee,” Ruth said. “It came within a few miles of where we are now. The physical strength of the fire was frightening. Politicians kept asking, ‘Why don’t you put it out?’ They didn’t grasp that we *couldn’t* put it out—there are some things human beings can’t do. That fire just roared—it roared across a huge firebreak.”

Farther south, she recalled an earlier catastrophe: in 1976, the Teton dam had blown out. “In this area, you won’t see many houses more than thirteen years old,” she said. “The flood almost took out a bridge at Idaho Falls, fifty miles away.” And, still farther south, Ruth mentioned another conflict between water owners and wildlife. The previous fall, a local chapter of Trout Unlimited, a private conservation group, had sued the Bureau of Reclamation because of low winter flow in the South Fork, which flows into the Snake and has its own dam. (Trout Unlimited lost, but the case is under appeal.) “Now people are calling us statesmanlike, because we didn’t try to sue for water—we weren’t confrontational,” Ruth said. She was driving, so she couldn’t really shrug, but her voice did, as she added, “The fish and the eagles on the South Fork are suffering.”

Ruth was going skiing the next day with her husband, but she made sure I would have something to do. When we reached Idaho Falls, we stopped at her house, and she lent me copies of her master’s thesis and her more recent report on the swans. I spent Sunday studying. Both Ruth’s thesis and the report, which reviewed all the pertinent records of all the agencies that had ever worked with the swans or affected their environment, were minutely detailed, but when every imaginable variable had been considered and correlated the findings were simple: the Rocky Mountain trumpeter population had not been getting enough to eat. The first persistent decline of the non-migratory population, in the mid-sixties, coincided with several years of extremely low winter flows from the Island Park Reservoir. These killed off many water plants, and the ice that formed made the rest inaccessible. A trumpeter needs as much as twenty pounds of wet vegetation a day. Another variable under human control, the feeding program at Red Rock Lakes Refuge, had changed from winter to winter and manager to manager, and the dip in the trumpeter population in the eighties coincided with the scantiest feeding program in the history of the refuge.

Undernourishment makes it difficult for the birds to survive Yellowstone’s harsh winters, and it affects breeding in two ways: undernourished trumpeter couples produce fewer eggs, and hunger will drive the brooding swan, or pen, off her nest to forage. Ideally, a pen should start the incubation period—roughly five weeks—with enough reserves to fast, but Ruth had observed hungry Yellowstone pens leaving their nests to look for food. Although swans are sociable when they flock in their winter quarters, pairs nest and breed in solitude. Trumpeters, like other swans, mate for life, and each couple stakes out its lifetime nesting territory. In Grande Prairie, a pair will claim a territory that averages three hundred and forty-six acres; at Red Rock Lakes, the average is thirty-two and a half acres; in Yellowstone Park, each pair demands its own mountain lake. The park and refuge managements protect the nesting sites from human disturbance, because a frightened pen will flee and leave her nest uncovered. (Usually, a pen who leaves her nest will spend between three and five minutes covering her eggs with whatever loose material is handy.) Ruth had scrambled to every one of the Yellowstone area’s widely separated and all but inaccessible nest-

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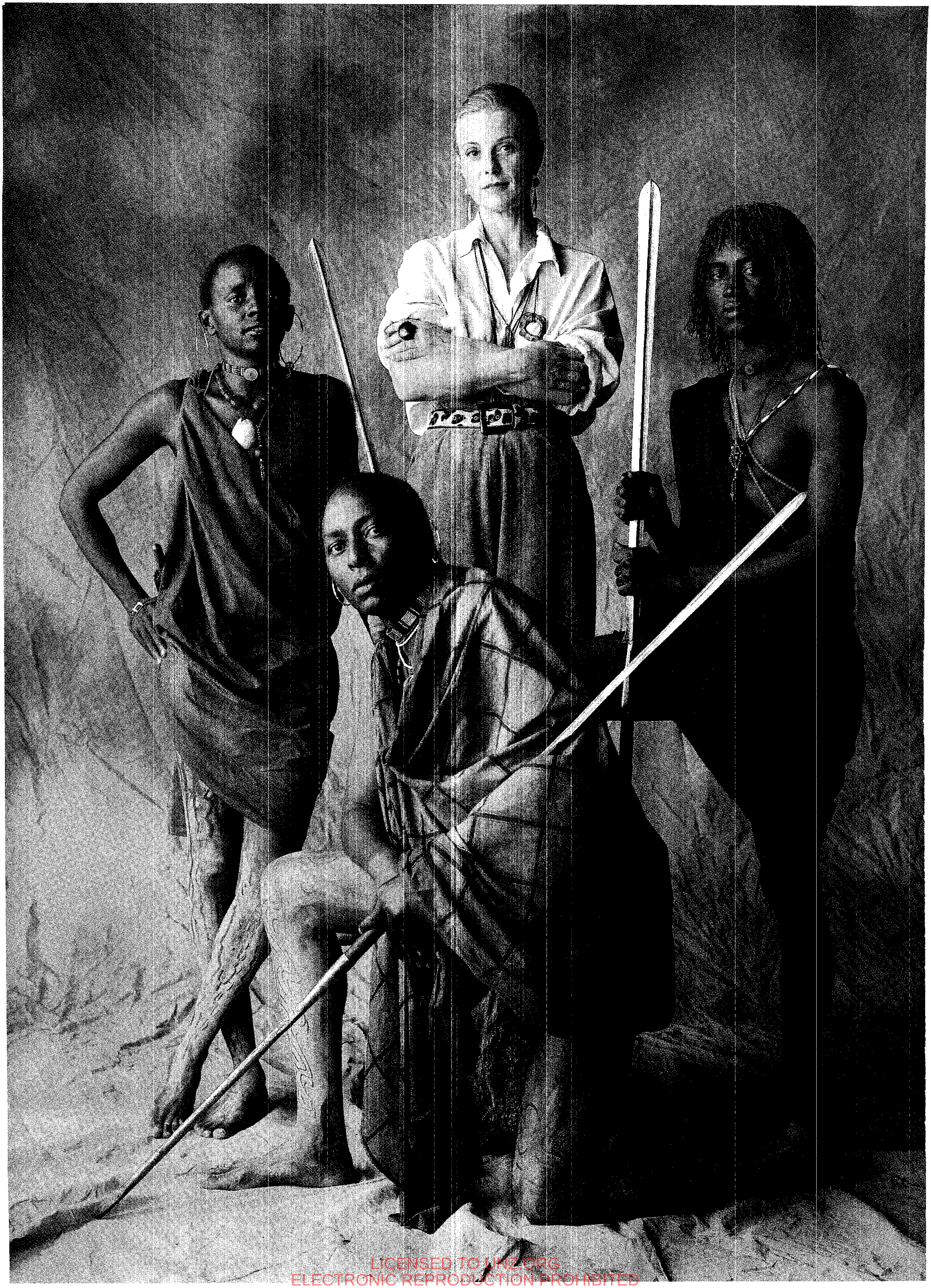

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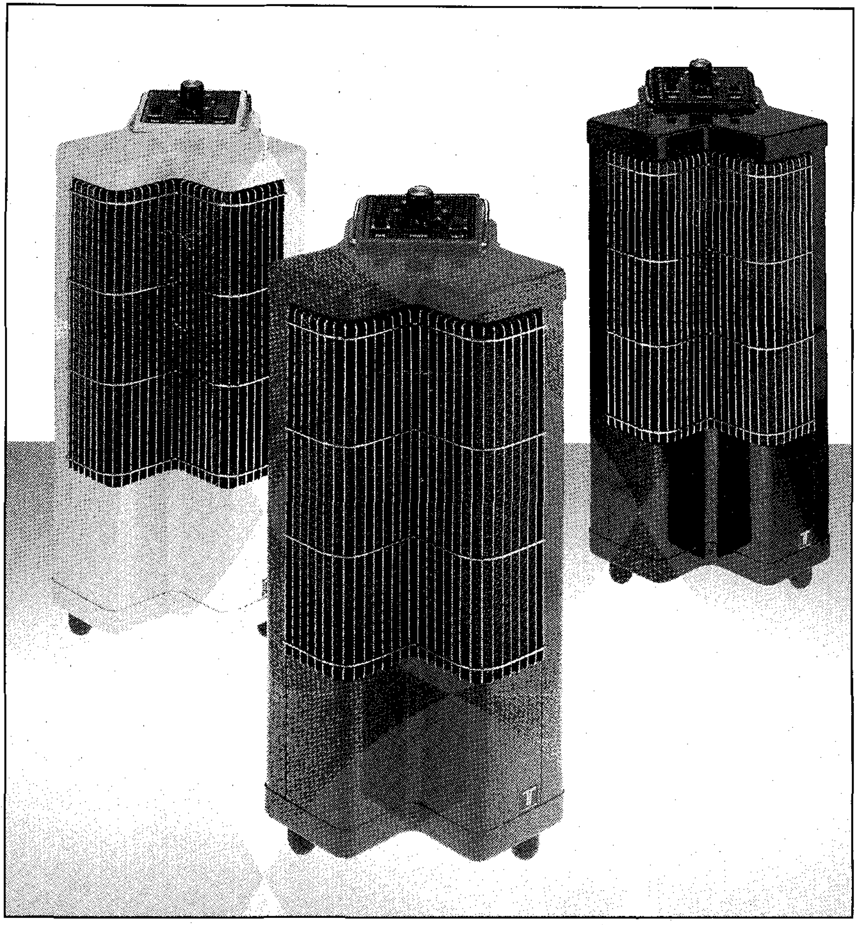

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THE TECHNOLOGY: The story begins in the Arctic. A small Colorado company had an order from the U.S. Government to manufacture a vacuum insulated stainless steel canteen that would stand up to hard use and keep liquids from freezing in the torturous Arctic cold. It took the company a great deal of time to perfect the process of "pulling a vacuum" in a sealed metal system so that it stood up to hard use, yet could be manufactured economically. Now, after seven years of additional research and over twenty worldwide patents they have used that original technology to produce a room heating unit that leaps a generation beyond every other heater on the market. At the heart of the Heatech™ heater is the vacuum technology developed to preserve warmth in the Arctic. Here the vacuum is used to cause water to boil almost instantly at approximately 130°F instead of the usual 212°F. Water inside the sealed Heatech system turns to steam and rises in vertical tubes. There the heat is transferred to fins which in turn heat the cold room air that is then blown through a diffusion screen to bring you warmth where you need it.

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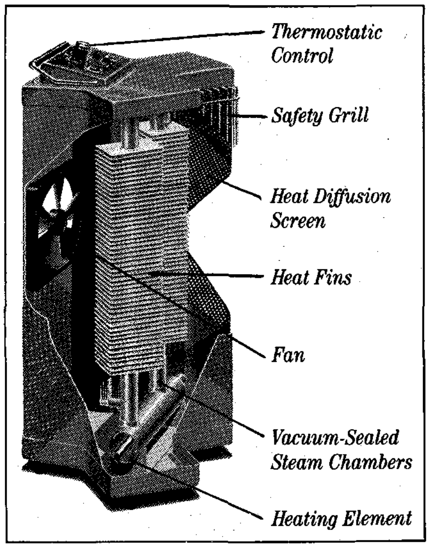
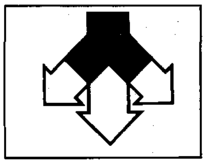
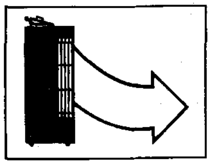




Multi-directional heat flow



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ing sites, often carrying her equipment—a weatherproofed camera with a battery pack, designed to take time-lapse photographs, or else a telescope with a tripod—and sneaking close enough to set it up without letting the birds know she was there. I remarked later that I thought she deserved another master's, in guerrilla warfare, and she said, "Oh, that!" I also said something critical about panicky trumpeter mothers deserting their eggs, and she said firmly, "The rule of a long-lived animal is 'Save yourself.' The pen can breed another year."

My reading material made it clear why Ruth's and Jeff's advisers had tried to warn them off trumpeter swans: there are so few that it is hard to get enough data to produce the large-scale generalizations we call science. Even the experts have to make do with anecdotes. For example, biologists know that male trumpeters, or cobs, defend their enormous nesting grounds, though they are not supposed to be aggressive fighting birds. Winston Banko had heard of a cob who rose to attack a low-flying airplane, and Ruth had heard of one who was holding an invading swan's head under the water, apparently with every intention of drowning the intruder, until the photographer who found them intervened. No one can say whether those episodes are typical or exceptional.

Here is another anecdote. I had read somewhere that trumpeters are less wary of human beings than tundra swans are. I asked Ruth about this when we were on our way back from Harriman. She wasn't sure. "When they flock together, you sometimes see the tundras move off a little faster, but I think it depends on the individual bird," she said. "As a biologist, I know I'm not even supposed to think this sort of thing, but I find that trumpeters are a lot like dogs. When you pick them up to band or collar them, they don't keep fighting, the way geese do. They sort of flop down in your arms, like a dog. Right after the freeze, Jeff found a swan and a cygnet that were too weak to move. Jeff took them up on his snowmobile, and we went to a house in the park. They were too weak to eat, so we put them in a tub of warm water overnight, and they perked up the next morning, and we could feed them. They were terribly emaciated, and we wondered if they were suffering from anything besides hypothermia. We took them back to Idaho Falls in the truck. We put them in burlap bags—all but their heads—so they wouldn't stretch their wings, and Jeff held the adult in his lap. It just sat there, and looked out of the window with great curiosity. The cygnet sat between us and kept pecking at the gearshift knob and at my earring"—Ruth was wearing small blue shell earrings—"just like a puppy."

My Sunday reading also suggested that "wildlife management" comes close to being a contradiction in terms, because wildlife isn't very manageable. Trumpeter swans are elusive. "We don't know where a third of the swans that leave here go," Ruth told me. And wild animals, unlike domestic animals, are hard for human beings to teach, though the animals can teach themselves and each other. Ruth had observed that couples nesting for the first time often built nests inadequate to protect their eggs but that they had usually figured out the job by their second year. And I was lucky enough to have seen that the Henry's Fork swans had learned what the Teton River swans knew about loafing on a snowfield.

Ruth's report concluded that the task of trumpeter management is to teach the Rocky Mountain birds a new—or, rather, a very old—migratory tradition. (First, of course, the present year-round flocks must be given enough food and water to restore them in health and numbers. In 1986, there were only three hundred and thirty-one adult birds.) Wildlife managers must disperse the swans—ideally, to winter climates that are less savage. When the flock is scattered, no single local disaster will threaten them all. If the birds do disperse, however, they will face new hazards. Some of the hazards are environmental. The Minnesota trumpeters suffered last winter, for example, when they swallowed old shotgun pellets exposed by low water levels following a drought. Some of the hazards are incalculable. Ms. Drennan had shown me an article in *American Birds* by Larry Hindman, of the Maryland Forest, Park and Wildlife Service, in which he reported seeing two immature trumpeters wintering on Chesapeake Bay in 1984. The birds had been banded by the Canadian Wildlife Service, and when he called Canada he was told that those swans came from eggs that had been removed and given to mute swans to hatch. Before I went to Idaho I telephoned Mr. Hindman to find out what had happened, and he said, "One of them was killed, and we don't know what became of the other."

Sometimes the birds run into unteachably destructive human beings. Some of the Rocky Mountain birds pioneered into Utah, for example, and were shot there. Utah allows hunters to take migrating tundra swans, and a hunter might honestly mistake one swan for another, but Ruth also told me that people who are caught shooting trumpeters in Idaho—where there is no legal swan season—commonly plead that they mistook the swan for a snow goose. That has to be a lie, because geese, attractive as they are, look stubby and almost dowdy compared with swans, and, besides, snow geese have black-tipped wings.

Though the risks of dispersal are great, Ruth's report judged that the risks of allowing the birds to remain in their present habitat are greater. The report's recommendation sets target dates for establishing winter refuges farther south and persuading the swans to use them: two refuges by 1997 and another two by 2007. The report also recommends that after the swans have moved, Red Rock Lakes stop winter feeding, so that the birds won't come back.

A SNOWSTORM blew in and out of Idaho Falls on Monday morning, but it didn't interfere with the program Ruth had designed for me. She had decided that I should meet the elder statesmen of the swan crisis, beginning with her supervisor, Herb Pollard. Mr. Pollard greeted me in his office at the regional headquarters of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, in Idaho Falls. He is a tall, slender man, strikingly handsome, with regular features and dark hair and a mustache, both slightly dusted with gray.

He said apologetically that he had a meeting in Boise in the afternoon, so he couldn't give me as much time as he would have liked. In the time he had, though, he did what I think Ruth had hoped he would do: he framed the trumpeter crisis within last winter's general wildlife crisis, and he emphasized that the conflict between swans and water users had been resolved.

"This has been an unparalleled winter," Mr. Pollard said. "After a two-year drought, there's a low water flow, and low food, on the ranges, so we have to feed elk, antelope, and moose. The moose have been moving into the towns. Usually, we get five or maybe six a year. In the spring, the yearling cows wander in by accident, and in the fall it's more often the bulls—young bulls who haven't yet found a mate. Sometimes in the winter we get a couple of calves whose mothers have turned them loose. We've never had a winter like this one, with close to eighty moose coming into the towns. Eighty moose!"

Mr. Pollard explained that everyone in the office has a specialty. He had done his graduate work in fish biology, he said, and had become an expert in Western water laws during sixteen years in which he had tried to persuade the Bureau of Reclamation to take account of fishermen. Idaho laws allot water rights for "beneficial" purposes, which were originally specified as agriculture, manufacturing, and mining. The state added wildlife in 1976. "Wildlife management is very new in Idaho," he said, and he told me a story about a governor who was supposed to have rejected a conservation proposal by saying, "Why, we've got resources we haven't even abused yet!"

"This is one of the biggest irrigated agricultural areas in the United States," Mr. Pollard went on. "Without water storage, we'd have no agriculture. The irrigation goes for potatoes, sugar beets, brewer's barley, and alfalfa. Agriculture, hydropower, and wildlife are in conflict, but usually when we have a crisis we have some positive results about using water for wildlife. The Bureau of Reclamation is more and more aware that its mission is going to expand. Its initial mission was to build dams to reclaim desert areas. Now it's taking account of wildlife."

Mr. Pollard believes that problems teach. "It's only sixteen years since we got the Endangered Species Act of 1973, and we're still learning," he said. "We're all learning better ways. The drought taught the farmers to use water better. The Bureau learned how to make water go farther. I'm thrilled by the number of people who pulled together for the swans. Elected officials helped, private citizens helped. Ruth got a grain storer's name from the phone book that Sunday and called him up. She didn't know him, she just called him up on a Sunday afternoon, and he got his friends out, and they all loaded his truck with grain and drove it up to the park for the swans."

Mr. Pollard contrasted the suit on behalf of the South Fork trout with the coöperation that had rescued the swans. "Now everybody feels he has helped," he said. "Nobody was forced to do anything. Everybody agreed, everybody pitched in. We're in the middle of a change in Idaho water laws, or maybe a change in the way we think of Idaho water laws. I see this whole event as democracy working. Everybody had his say."

After I left Mr. Pollard, I drove back to my motel to wait for a call from Ruth's second elder statesman—Max Van Den Berg, the Bureau of Reclamation's project superintendent, who was driving up from Burley. We met in the motel's coffee shop, and settled into a booth. Mr. Van Den Berg is tall, dark, and husky, and had on a gray cowboy hat. He told me that he had been brought up on a ranch in South Dakota, where he and his brothers broke their own horses and broke horses for their neighbors, and that his hobby was writing cowboy poetry. (His profession is civil engineering.)

I had been having trouble imagining the quantities of water flowing over the dam into the Henry's Fork, so the first question I asked Mr. Van Den Berg was how many acre-feet an Idaho farmer needs to raise a crop. He said, "In this part of Idaho, the average is four acre-feet per acre." I translated the water users' initial donation of sixteen hundred acre-feet into four hundred acres of 1989 cropland, and finally had something I could visualize.

"The Snake is a marvellous river," Mr. Van Den Berg said, but when I asked how it had behaved before it was dammed he answered that it had flooded in the spring and trickled in the summer. He didn't want me to forget about flood control. "In 1986, when we had the second-biggest runoff on record, the Corps of Engineers calculated that the South Fork dam prevented thirty-nine million dollars' worth of damage," he said. "When the Teton dam failed, in 1976, that was a one-day flood, but this would have been a seven-day flood." Aridity is the constant, though, he added. "Everything in southeast Idaho depends on irrigation. Before irrigation, nobody lived here—only a few nomadic Indians and fur trappers wandered in and out."

Mr. Van Den Berg explained that the principle of Idaho water law is "First in time, first in right," which means that earlier rights take priority over later rights. Some of the earliest date from the nineteenth century; on the Henry's Fork, a wildlife right to some winter flow was established only in 1981, and ranks very low indeed. Like Mr. Pollard, Mr. Van Den Berg spoke of the past year—a record-setting freeze following a record-setting drought—as exceptional. "I see this sort of scenario so infrequently that I don't think it makes sense to buy a permanent supply of water for wildlife," he said. "I *do* think we should have a permanent plan in place, so that when we run into these situations we know what can be done, and how it's going to be done. We scrambled this time, but the coöperation we got was heartwarming. The important thing is to have all the affected parties sit down and see what we can do. There are always trade-offs. We're balancing new needs. We have to meet the needs of the people who have paid for the facilities. I hope we never get into a situation where we have to serve one interest and totally destroy another."

HOPING for one more glimpse of the trumpeters, I invited myself to tag along on Tuesday, when Ruth and Jeff escorted the television team to Harriman. The team consisted of three jaunty, hardworking young men—Kevin Burke, the photographer; John Gibson, the reporter; and Robert Neustadt, the producer—who planned to tell the story of the trumpeter crisis on a weekly half-hour news magazine, "The West," which appears on Station KCRA, the NBC affiliate in Sacramento. Our first stop was a bridge over the Henry's Fork, at the only reasonably long stretch of the river I saw that ran straight. Ruth pointed out a muskrat swimming across the stream from snowbank to snowbank. Then an eagle shot through the low clouds. Far away, almost at the point where the straight stretch ended, a little stand of bare bushes leaned over the water, and there a single trumpeter floated amid a small convoy of ducks. The swan looked tragic, because the absence of another swan suggested bereavement, and also majestic, because the typical trumpeter carriage of the head, at a right angle to the long neck, suggests the posture of a ruler.

The association of swans with royalty and nobility is as old as Europe, or older. The libretto of "Lohengrin" put together several versions of the legend of a swan knight. In some of the earliest written forms of the story, a stranger named Helyas arrives in a boat drawn by a swan (a princely youth under a spell) to rescue a noblewoman in distress. Two leaders of the First Crusade, Godfrey of Bouillon, who died in 1100, and his brother Baldwin, the first King of Jerusalem, who died in 1118, were said to be Helyas' grandsons. It's as if writers of our own time had inserted Goldilocks or Snow White into the genealogy of Roosevelt or Churchill. Nevertheless, in succeeding centuries the House of Bouillon continued to claim descent from Helyas, and the claim was disputed by other noble families of the Low Countries and the Rhineland, among them the House of Cleves. My lone trumpeter suggested why the legend persisted: the bird's grave, elegant presence lent distinction to the monotonous wilderness. Whiter than the snow, it dazzled amid the forlorn landscape, and, as aristocrats imagine they do, dominated its setting merely by being in it.

After Kevin filmed the bird, we drove on to a bluff overlooking a shorter stretch of the Henry's Fork, this one empty of bird life. Kevin photographed Ruth and Jeff wading in the water and tossing out grain for the swans. I wondered where the swans were, and began to worry that we might have to leave before seeing them. We had driven up through a blizzard, and now, from where I stood on the bluff, it looked as if another blizzard was on its way. I could see the horizon disappearing in clouds and a curtain of approaching snow hanging in the air. As the grays of the clouds overhead were shading to black, Ruth announced that Jeff would drive to another part of the stream, in the hope that the noise of his snowmobile would frighten a few of the stronger swans into the air, so they would discover that the stream was now filled with grain, and, incidentally, fly past Kevin's camera. Jeff rode off across the darkening plain, and Kevin pointed his camera at the glum sky.

We waited. In a little while, a single swan flew past, and Ruth said, "He's seen the grain!" A pair of swans followed. The birds were not flying very high or very fast. Migrating swans average between fifty and fifty-five miles an hour, but this flight was a reconnaissance rather than a journey, and its slow passage allowed us a prolonged moment of awe and delight. When swans fly, their midsections flatten into slender, elongated curves. The gracefulness of their extended bodies, with long necks outstretched, is exactly what human beings try to achieve in classical ballet, but our imitations never attain the subtlety of the flying swans' forms. Their wings seemed relaxed as well as powerful; they moved without the nervous flutter that human beings often employ in miming birds. Their whiteness contrasted with the dark clouds, and I suppose one might say that they were a dramatic sight, except that their beauty goes beyond drama. The beauty of swans is conclusive; when you see it, there's nothing to debate, oppose, or add.

Yeats called swans "mysterious." I'm not sure what he meant, so, since I came home from Idaho, I've been rereading "The Wild Swans at Coole." Now I notice, approvingly, that Yeats counted the swans, like a conscientious birder, and tells us that he saw fifty-nine wild swans resting on migration. The volume called "The Wild Swans at Coole" was published in 1919, the year that the first nesting pairs of trumpeters were discovered in Yellowstone. And, of course, I appreciate that Yeats'

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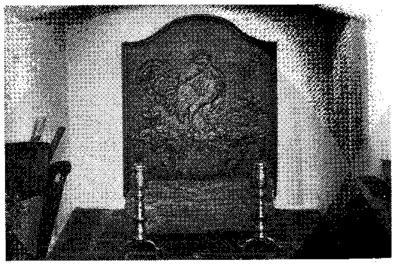

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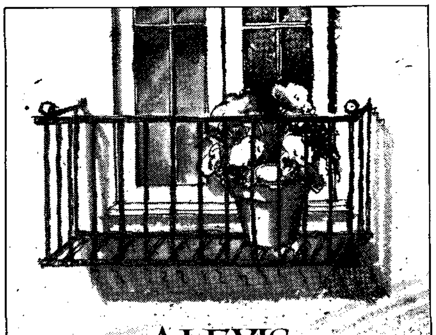

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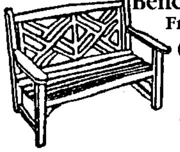

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swans behaved as Ruth's do: the poem tells us that every October for nineteen years Yeats had seen them return to the same place.

I had Yeats stowed in my menta baggage when I flew to Idaho, and after I heard Ruth say, as she often does, "I think of the trumpeter as a symbol of all that we have lost," i occurred to me that in losing our swan we lost some of our ability to understand our literary heritage. We los sight of the spark that fired the storie and poems, and swans were reduced to literary conventions. We also becam estranged from other cultures, for i appears that every human group tha has ever known swans has seen them a we do—as the epitome of grace and nobility. The only mythical swan I have come across who behaves badly i the one who assaulted Leda, and, o course, he was not really a swan bu Zeus in disguise.

When I first read "The Wild Swan at Coole," as a schoolgirl, it didn't occur to me to wonder why Yeats saw hi swans

> All suddenly mount
> And scatter wheeling in great broken
>   rings
> Upon their clamorous wings.

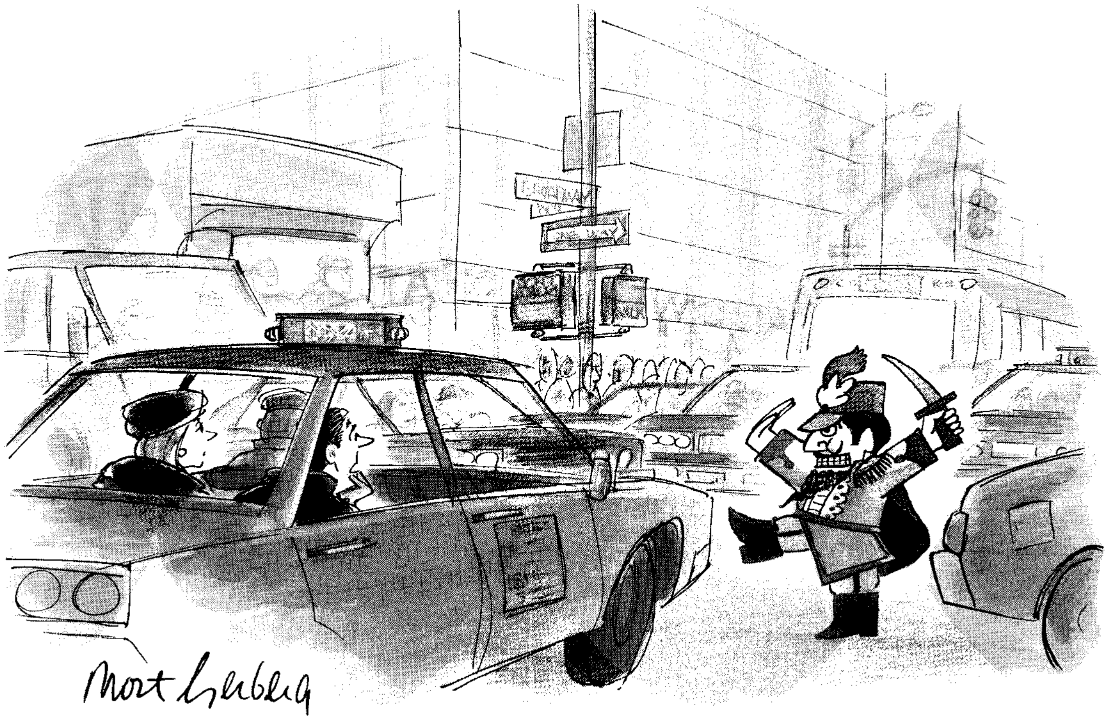
Now I think I know what happened in Ireland all those Octobers ago: I think Yeats inadvertently frightened those birds. Perhaps he coughed. Perhap he took out his handkerchief to polish his eyeglasses. Yeats' birds would have been Bewick's swans or whoope swans, not trumpeters. But the suddenness and the flapping that Yeats describes suggest birds straining to escape, and, as far as wildlife student have been able to determine, man scare wild swans more than any other anima does.

I don't know whether the three bird that Jeff startled began their flight, a Yeats' did, by wheeling and circling. I didn't have a chance to ask, because when Jeff came back it was snowing, and as we were rushing to escape the blizzard one of the snowmobile wouldn't start, so we were in a mild panic. Yeats' last view was of rising rings of swans, but I think he would have been equally enchanted by mine. The last sight I had of the trumpeter was the three swans flying noiselessly their long, lyric line a sustained white legato over the Henry's Fork, beyond a grove of lodgepole pines, and out o view. —NAOMI BLIVEN

AROUND CITY HALL

That's Life

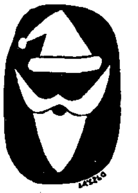
As the last days of each December loom up, earnest retrospectives of the year just ending fill column after newspaper column and crowd the airwaves, the hope of those who offer them often seeming to be that from all the flashbacks some true meaning, some ultimate picture, will somehow emerge—rather in the style of the old-time flip-books. In the end, the message rarely amounts to much more than "Look—we've come through!" When a December also signals the end of a decade, as this one does, looking back in an effort to discover what it all meant has a special air of urgency. How will those ten years be remembered in history? Surely not as the Elegant Eighties, which is how that decade of the nineteenth century was often referred to after it ended. Historians back then tended to label eras according to how they were remembered by the rich or otherwise fortunate: the so-called Gay Nineties were also the years of Wall Street panics, the Homestead and Pullman strikes, and other unmerry events. In what has not been a notably elegant year in this city, this month marks not only the last days of a decade but the end of the twelve-year reign at City Hall of Mayor Edward Koch, who, to general astonishment, was politically upended in the September Democratic primary by Manhattan Borough President David Dinkins, losing his chance to run for a fourth term. There will be retrospectives on the Koch years in the newspapers and on television, but they are not likely to have the portentous tone that they might have had if his sudden-death defeat had come in some year other than 1989, when the words "astonishing" and "incredible" have become commonplace descriptions of what has gone on in political worlds elsewhere. In Eastern Europe, people who were down are now up; the outs are in. At the recent summit, President Bush wore a tie that featured the United States flag overlapping the flag of the Soviet Union—the former Evil Empire—and vice versa, with doves soaring among the pairs of flags. Compared with events elsewhere, an abrupt change at the top of a municipal government—even if the municipality is New York and Koch has been a worldwide symbol of the city—is quite a way down the list of this year's significant political developments. The Primary Day defeat of Koch by Dinkins—who narrowly won the general election and will be sworn in on January 1st as New York's first black mayor—followed Governor Mario Cuomo's public mention of the city's deep need for racial healing and his prediction that the winner would be the person who could bring people together. Dinkins was seen as the "healer" candidate, in contrast to Koch, who is regarded as being indifferent or hostile to the interests of blacks and other minorities by many New Yorkers, including black leaders (though not Dinkins, whose reputation for politesse and disinclination to engage in name-calling helped him win both elections, in which he carried about thirty per cent of the white vote). At Dinkins' inauguration, no matter how joyful the celebration may be, it will not be easy to match the imagery of an appearance here in September by the Soviet Red Army chorus. During a concert in the Wall Street area, it sang, in uniform and with heavy Slavic accents, "I Got Plenty o' Nuttin'," from "Porgy and Bess." George Gershwin's folk opera first opened here in 1935, when the hit show on the radio was "Amos 'n' Andy." On Election Day this year, the top-ranking television program was "The Cosby Show," about an affluent black family in which the father is a doctor and the mother a lawyer. Near the end of the opera, Porgy sings "There's a Boat Dat's Leavin' Soon for New York," and takes off in the hope of finding Bess, who has left for this city, where blacks were thought to have a better chance than in the South to get ahead. The audiences who saw "Porgy and Bess" in 1935 would have been startled if they could have known that there would be black mayors in Atlanta, New Orleans, Birmingham, and many other Southern cities long before there was a black mayor of New York. And surely they would have been surprised at the news that, on the same day that Dinkins won the mayoralty here, the



"I think I've finally seen one performance too many of 'The Nutcracker.'"

first black governor since Reconstruction days, Douglas Wilder, would be elected in Virginia. Next month, Wilder will move into the governor's mansion in Richmond, the capital of the Confederacy. Reminded the day after the election that "Carry Me Back to Old Virginny," with its reference to the darkies playing, was still the state song, he said that for all intents and purposes it had been decertified. "They don't sing it anymore," he said of his fellow-Virginians. "They don't sing it around *me*." A few days later, Missouri Representative Richard Gephardt, the House Majority Leader, suggested that either Wilder or Dinkins might well be on the national ticket in 1992. This did seem to be pushing things. Though both victories were truly historic feats, Wilder's margin of victory over the Republican candidate, Marshall Coleman, was about one-half of one per cent, and Dinkins' margin over his Republican opponent, former United States Attorney Rudolph Giuliani, was less than two and a half per cent.

A considerable number of New Yorkers will doubtless soon be complaining that they miss Koch terribly—after all, in the September primary in this heavily Democratic city he took forty-two per cent of the vote. A few days after his defeat, however, Koch began making it clear that he will hardly be disappearing from the local scene. By late November, he had lined up for his unretiring retirement from his official duties half a dozen or so alliances that will keep him busy and probably make him quite rich (not that, with his hundred-and-thirty-thousand-dollar mayoral salary, and with free housing at Gracie Mansion, among other perks, he has exactly been a candidate for handouts). He will be a full partner in a medium-sized midtown law firm, with an office overlooking Rockefeller Center. He will serve as a visiting fellow at New York University's Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, which will also give him an office. The *Post* will provide him with still another office, in which he can write a weekly column for the paper. In addition, he will be a co-host on an hour-long Sunday interview show on the local CBS television station and appear as a political commentator on the CBS Evening News from time to time. He will have a morning radio show. He also has plans to hit the golden lecture circuit and make a few "tasteful" commercials. In other words, the former mayor, just as in his City Hall days, will be all over the place. Referring to the long list of lucrative assignments, Koch told a reporter late last month, "It drives my opponents batty, absolutely *meshuga*. . . . They thought that . . . I would fall apart, I would be bitter and unable to accept the outcome. . . . It adds to my glee."



Of course, the power to sound off and to entertain, which he has freely exercised in his City Hall years, will not now carry the special authority or the instant shock value that it was endowed with because he was the mayor. At a press conference a few days before this year's primary, at which he announced a new program to help the handicapped with transportation problems, an advocate for the handicapped stood up and accused him of having previously opposed such projects every step of the way, and of supporting them now only because of the vote just ahead. "The fact is, this couldn't happen without me," the Mayor snapped back at his accuser. "At this moment, every governmental action, every policy of this city, happens because I approve it." Despite all his new offices, getting used to the outside world may require some adjustment, in both style and substance, on the part of the Mayor. Early this month, he was asked whether certain objects in his office which he planned to remove to his new apartment might be considered city property. They might not, he said, "because I say so."

KOCH'S annual—and last—party at Gracie Mansion for City Hall reporters was on the night of December 6th. The day before, Koch delivered a state-of-the-city address at City Hall. Several weeks earlier, he had referred to his final speech before the City Club of New York as the equivalent of General George Washington's farewell to his troops—a salute that was delivered in 1783, at Fraunces Tavern, a few blocks south of City Hall. His state-of-the-city speech was even closer to a farewell to the troops, as, toward the end, Koch—on occasion rather emotionally—sang the praises of his favorite deputy mayors and commissioners, past and present. At his party for reporters, in keeping with his visible effort since the primary to be on his good behavior, the Mayor was graciousness itself to his guests—an approach that he likes to describe as "making nice-nice" or being "kissy-huggy." His guests made nice back. Everybody pretended that, a couple of weeks earlier, he hadn't given an interview to the Los Angeles *Times* (he may not have expected the local press to see it, but the *Post* picked it up) in which he described being mayor of this city as "the most oppressive job in the world," because of "the crap" that he had taken for twelve years. "I think the press is out of control," he had said. "I think that the vicious, venomous attacks of some members of the press are such as to keep lots of people out of office." One of the goodbye presents his guests gave him was an official press card, issued by the Police Department. After January 1st, as a radio and television representative and a columnist for the *Post*, he will presumably be turning up at public events side by side with his journalist tormentors.

Gracie Mansion, which the Mayor must now move out of, dates back to 1799. From the porch of the Mansion, wooden steps lead to a broad lawn that slopes down to the East River. Small boats splash by, and at night in the distance ribbons of lights gleam on the bridges. At his party for reporters two years ago, Koch spoke of the 1989 election and said that, fortunately, he had no doubt that he would win it, because "I have no intention of giving up this house." At the 1988 dinner, he mentioned the names of several people who, according to rumor, might take him on this year, and asked reporters to raise their hands if they thought that that would happen. "How many of you think David Dinkins is going to run?" Out of politeness, only a few hands went up. The guests were under the impression that if they suggested there was a real chance that he might have to give up the house (and everything else that goes with being in charge of the city) it would spoil the Mayor's evening—not knowing how oppressive he considered the job to be.

At the Mayor's party for reporters—to which a number of city officials and Koch staff members had also been invited—the entertainment was provided by a cabaret singer named Jeff Harnar. The songs that he happened to choose did not bring many smiles to the faces of those on the Mayor's staff who had not yet lined up future employment. There was "Lonely Town" ("A town's a lonely town when you pass through and there is no one waiting there for you"). There was "That's Life." Even the finale, "Count Your Blessings," didn't seem to lift any spirits.

On December 7th, another of this month's many retrospectives was offered. Koch's imminent departure moved the city's Department of Records and Information Services (DORIS) to open, in the lobby of the Surrogate's Court, northeast of City Hall, an exhibit, complete with drawings and photographs, on all the city's mayors since the end of the Revolution—fifty-nine of them, starting with James Duane, who took office in 1784, and including the Mayor-elect. Someone once concluded that the habit of wearing beards and mustaches tended to flourish when there was a queen on the British throne, most notably during the reigns of the two Elizabeths and Victoria. The panorama of New York mayors does not, of course, go back as far as Elizabeth I, but the first bearded mayor in the exhibit, Daniel F. Tiemann (who may have been wearing his beard a long time), took office in 1858. With one exception, the next twenty mayors, up through Ardolph L. Kline (1913), had beards or mustaches, or both, the clean-shaven exception being Mayor George B. McClellan (1904-1909), the son of the Civil War general. From 1913 up through Koch, no types with beards or mustaches were elected. David Dinkins will be not only New York's first black mayor but its first mayor to have a mustache since Mayor Kline.

DURING the two days that followed the opening of the exhibit on the mayors, an event was held which was part retrospection and part contemplation of what lies ahead for the city. In 1978, Koch's first year in office, a project called Setting Municipal Priorities was started, with the intention of providing an independent analysis of the challenges of governing New York as well as guidance for the city officials charged with trying to meet them. At that point, fiscal concerns were high in the local consciousness, because of the city's brush with bankruptcy in the mid-nineteen-seventies. Later, the S.M.P., as it was soon known, would also—and increasingly—be concerned with the city's social problems. The moving spirits behind the S.M.P. project were Charles Brecher, a professor of public administration at N.Y.U.'s Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service (one of his colleagues there next year will, of course, be the former mayor), and Raymond D. Horton, a professor of public administration at Columbia's Graduate School of Business, with very substantial backing over the years from the Citizens Budget Committee. The S.M.P. practice was to produce a volume every year or so on what the city government was doing—or should be doing—in various critical areas. Individual chapters were written by academics, public officials, and other expert sorts. A conference would then be held to which city and state officials, lawyers, foundation heads, bankers, union leaders, and members of the press would be invited to discuss the book's conclusions over a two-day period. The first such conference was held in 1979, and there have been seven since. The Mayor attended the sessions in 1979 and 1980. The 1980 volume concluded that the retrenchment policies of New York State and the Koch administration following the fiscal crisis had not been evenhanded but had fallen most heavily on the city's poorer residents. The Mayor took great offense at this judgment and was particularly incensed at a *News* headline that somewhat overstated the conclusion: "KOCH BALANCES BUDGET ON THE BACKS OF THE POOR." He demanded that Brecher and Horton apologize. They said that as responsible members of the academic community they could not properly do so, since the figures were accurate. Each year thereafter, the Mayor, citing their failure to apologize, declined the invitation to attend the conference. He also refused to allow anyone in his administration to attend—a boycott that no one disobeyed.

Most of the conferences have been held at Arden House—named for the idyllic forest in "As You Like It"—the baronial country home that the nineteenth-century railroad tycoon Edward H. Harriman built at the top of a steep hill overlooking the Ramapo Valley fifty miles north of the city. The Harriman family gave the five-hundred-acre estate to Columbia University forty years ago. Despite the popular belief that urban concerns are out of style, a hundred and fifty people attended this month's conference, making it the largest in S.M.P. history. Although a house in which that many people confer, eat meals, and bed down can hardly look the same as it did when a family lived there, the special attraction of Arden House is that it remains filled with reminders of earlier days. Family portraits and photographs are in place. Along a panelled second-floor corridor are paintings and prints showing gaunt-faced American Indians, some in feathered headdresses, invoking the era when wealthy Easterners used to visit the Dakotas and other Indian territories as their descendants might tour Third World countries now. Books on the bookshelves are clearly left over from the Harriman days: "Eight Cousins," "Groton School Verses," "With Byron in Italy," "Ouida's Novels." Beside the huge stone library fireplace—in which a fire was kept blazing during the S.M.P. meetings—is a portrait of Averell Harriman in an open-necked shirt, aged twenty or so. The east wing, where conference receptions are held, was built for Averell Harriman and his first wife, so that they could have quarters that were separate from the rest of the family. On the walls are portraits of his polo ponies in the days when he played on championship polo teams. His interest in government came much later. His one term as governor of New York ended in 1958. He played prominent roles in the Administrations of four Presidents: Roosevelt, Truman, Kennedy, and Johnson. He died in Washington in July, 1986, in his ninety-fifth year.

The S.M.P. volume that was discussed this month in that monument of nineteenth-century noblesse and splendor concerned itself with, among other subjects, the problems and opportuni-

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ties created by the streams of immigrants who are changing the face of New York City (nearly a third of today's New Yorkers were born in some other country). There were also the living conditions of children in welfare hotels, the plight of the homeless, discrimination against blacks in city employment—and other subjects that did not always come up when the Harrimans and their guests were sitting in front of the same blazing fireplaces ninety years ago but that were only too vivid in the minds of the candidates for mayor in 1989.

The campaigns of some of the candidates, including the man who will be the city's first black mayor, were not entirely unrelated to the lives of the so-called robber barons, however: a bit of the old money came their way. In the fall of 1891, not long after the end of the Elegant Eighties, in the households of John Jacob Astor and E. H. Harriman, both Mrs. Astor and Mrs. Harriman were, as they then liked to put it, enceinte. As it happened, the babies—both sons—were born on the same day, November 15, 1891. One was Vincent Astor. (He died in February, 1959.) The other was Averell Harriman. It is their surviving wives—both much younger women, whom they married relatively late in life—who interested themselves financially in the 1989 mayoral campaign. Although Brooke Astor is a lifelong Republican—her apartment was one of the very few private residences to which Ronald and Nancy Reagan came to dinner during the Reagan Presidency—she has always been a strong admirer of Ed Koch. When it was pointed out to her that the streets were much cleaner in Washington, D.C., than in Koch's New York, she said that, given the choice, she would take Koch over cleaner streets any day. She contributed to her friend the Mayor the maximum allowed by the new city campaign-contributions law: three thousand dollars. She was also among the good friends he enlisted to help him raise money in the last days of the primary campaign, when he was running out of funds for television commercials. However, Mrs. Astor, who is known for her wide-ranging interest in the city's well-being, also saw worthy qualities in the Mayor's opponents. Last June, she contributed five hundred dollars to the Giuliani primary campaign. She made four separate contributions to Dinkins to help him out in the primary, and after Koch lost she contributed two thousand dollars to Dinkins for his general-election campaign. Pamela Harriman, Averell Harriman's widow, is the head of a group called Democrats for the 90's. Its offices are in her Washington house, and she contributes heavily to the enterprise and raises many of the funds for it. Its practice is not to involve itself in Democratic primaries. However, eight days into the general-election campaign a check for three thousand dollars went out from Democrats for the 90's to David Dinkins.

THE most recent of the S.M.P. conferences differed from those held since 1980 in one respect. Koch did not attend, but this time, when several prominent members of his administration, including First Deputy Mayor Stanley Brezenoff and Paul Dickstein, the city's budget director, were invited, as usual, they made so bold as to ask the Mayor if it would be all right for them to come, and participate in the give-and-take discussions of the crises facing the city. Koch gave permission. In any event, it seemed that a mayoral boycott was now history: the main speaker was Dinkins. He spoke for twenty minutes about his vision for New York, promising to be a mayor "for the whole city," to treat its diversity as its strength, and to establish "a tone of civility." At the end, mentioning the pressure of other engagements, he said he could not take questions from the audience. On his way out, however, he did meet briefly with reporters, below the organ loft in the Harriman music room.

Among the adjustments that New Yorkers will have to make after the new mayor is sworn in on January 1st are a number that have to do with mayoral style and language. During the campaign, Dinkins was described by his opponents as "a gentleman," or "courtly"—terms that in the city's street-smart political world often seemed intended as putdowns. His style of speaking also has an old-fashioned-to-the-point-of-antique quality. His responses to reporters' questions are studded with "pray-tell"s, "hereunto"s, and "albeit"s. This style will now take the place of Koch's cries of outrage (according to a local statistician he once declared himself outraged by twenty different circumstances in a five-day week), and his calling the United Nations a "cesspool" and Jimmy Carter's brother a "wacko"—mayoral judgments that made headlines as "pray-tell"'s do not. For this some reporters will find it hard to forgive Dinkins.

IN the first hours after his primary and general-election victories, Dinkins' eyes shone with joy, and there was a brilliant smile on his face. His usual expression, however, is serious, even mournful. Events in the weeks since his election have given him a great deal to look serious—even mournful—about. The questions raised by Giuliani and Giuliani's media adviser, Roger Ailes, about the circumstances of Dinkins' sale of cable-company stock to his son seemed to have been put to rest at the end of October. In mid-November, however, it was learned that the sale was being investigated by United States Attorney Andrew Maloney. There seemed little likelihood that, even if the shadows being cast on Dinkins' integrity eventually proved to be illusory, it would soon fade from public attention, since Maloney, long upstaged by Giuliani, the city's other United States Attorney, was thought to be eager to make big headlines of his own. Moreover, two of Maloney's close friends were Jerry Finkelstein, the multimillionaire former publisher of the *New York Law Journal*, and Finkelstein's son, Andrew Stein, who, as president of the City Council, would succeed to the mayoralty if Dinkins should have to step down for any reason. The view that politics stops at the courtroom door has never been widely held here.

In the campaign, both Koch and Giuliani frequently raised the issue of whether Dinkins was competent, up to the job. After his victory, the slow pace of his appointments to the new administration was cited as suggesting that his opponents had been right. However, on the morning Dinkins spoke at the S.M.P. conference, things began to look up. The day's papers carried biographies of eight Dinkins appointments, including four deputy mayors and his new press secretary, Albert Scardino. Scardino's appointment had been revealed a few days earlier, and it had been learned almost at once that Scardino, a *Times* reporter, had advised members of the Dinkins campaign, including the candidate, about the con-

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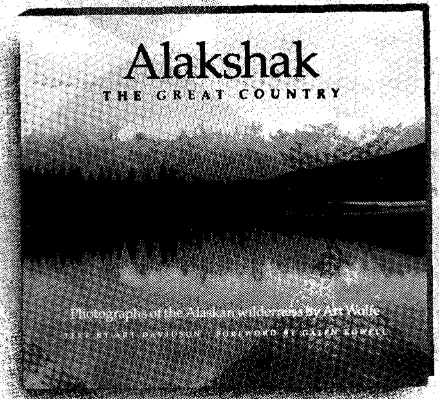

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duct of the campaign while he was working for the *Times*. He hadn't informed his editor about this, Scardino told the *Post*, because "I didn't think it was his business." The *Times* did not agree. Its executive editor, Max Frankel, wrote a severe memo to the staff in which he pointed out that conduct such as Scardino's was entirely contrary to the paper's ethics code and that if Scardino were not leaving anyhow "such a clear violation of our policy would have provoked disciplinary action." In that respect, the appointment was not a helpful development for an officeholder who, like Dinkins, was already being charged with ethical lapses.

This was not the first time that the *Times* editors had weighed in critically against Scardino, as quite a few people remembered and as an item in the *News* on December 7th pointed out. In an article last March in the *Times*, Scardino wrote, "Most reporters do not feel themselves bound by the ordinary rules of social behavior," and he added, "Given their financial and social status, few of them would ever be invited to participate in the counsel of government or big business; but because they operate the spotlights, they are invited to the big events." Since Scardino was himself a reporter, it seemed that he didn't care to be a member of a club that would have him as a member. The *Times*, in an editorial note a few days after this article appeared, said of his views that they should have been omitted or "attributed to those who espoused them"—a company that clearly would include Scardino.

If Dinkins' press secretary is to succeed in getting out the word about the new mayor's visions for the city, he will have to learn to put up with the socially and financially inferior types who will be writing about them. He has never covered New York politics and does not know the reporters who do. Since he moved up here, from Georgia, four years ago, he might, he said, have been in City Hall a time or two, but when he paid it a visit after being appointed he did not know where anything was—not even the pressroom. He was said to be a social friend of some members of Dinkins' campaign staff. During the Mayor-elect's brief meeting with the press at Arden House, he was asked whether Scardino's appointment didn't represent appointment by palship, and whether the choice of someone with such a low opinion of reporters didn't show his own contempt for the press. When he was asked about Scardino's view of reporters as expressed in the *Times* last March, Dinkins, looking a bit bewildered, said that he hadn't known about that episode: nobody had told him. Eventually, it may turn out that the appointment will look like a stroke of genius. In the very short run, however—just a passing impression, perhaps, since in the matter of some other appointments the Mayor-elect seems to have been kept better informed—it brought to some local minds the memory of another mayor whose opponents had raised questions about his competence to do the job: John P. O'Brien (1933; no mustache). O'Brien is remembered for his response when, soon after he was elected, someone asked who his police commissioner would be. "They haven't told me yet," he said.

MEANWHILE, at the Koch City Hall the recessional continues. Members of Koch's staff have kept assuring reporters that he can't wait to shake the dust of the mayoralty off his feet and get on with his exciting new life, but there was one indication that this was not entirely the case. Besides being formally inaugurated on January 1st, a new mayor must be informally sworn in a few hours before, at midnight, so that the city won't be without someone at the helm even for a few hours. Traditionally, departing mayors have made matters easier for their successors by moving out of Gracie Mansion well before the end-of-the-year deadline. In his political memoir "Mayor," Koch, describing the period when he was about to take office for the first time, wrote of his predecessor, Abraham Beame, and his wife, Mary, "In my head I was saying, They will never leave!" Dinkins had expressed some interest in having the informal swearing-in ceremony at Gracie Mansion just after the stroke of midnight on New Year's Day. The idea had to be dropped. Koch announced that he was having a New Year's Eve party at the Mansion, and, of course, such events last until after midnight, and could go on until all hours. Dinkins might say of Koch at some point, "I thought he'd *never* leave," but that, albeit understandable, would not be his style.

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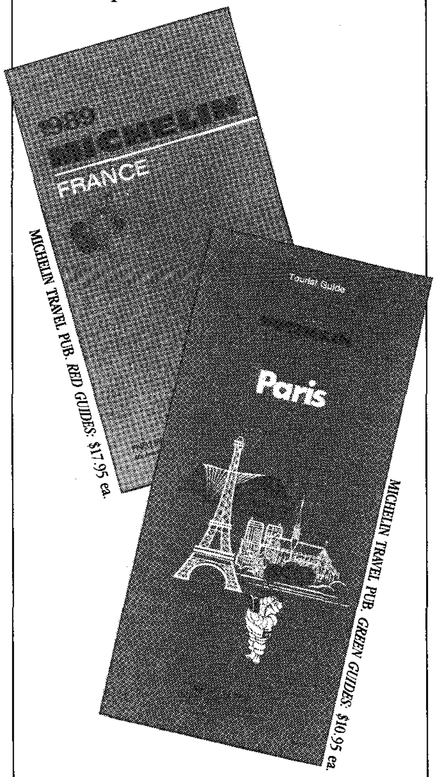

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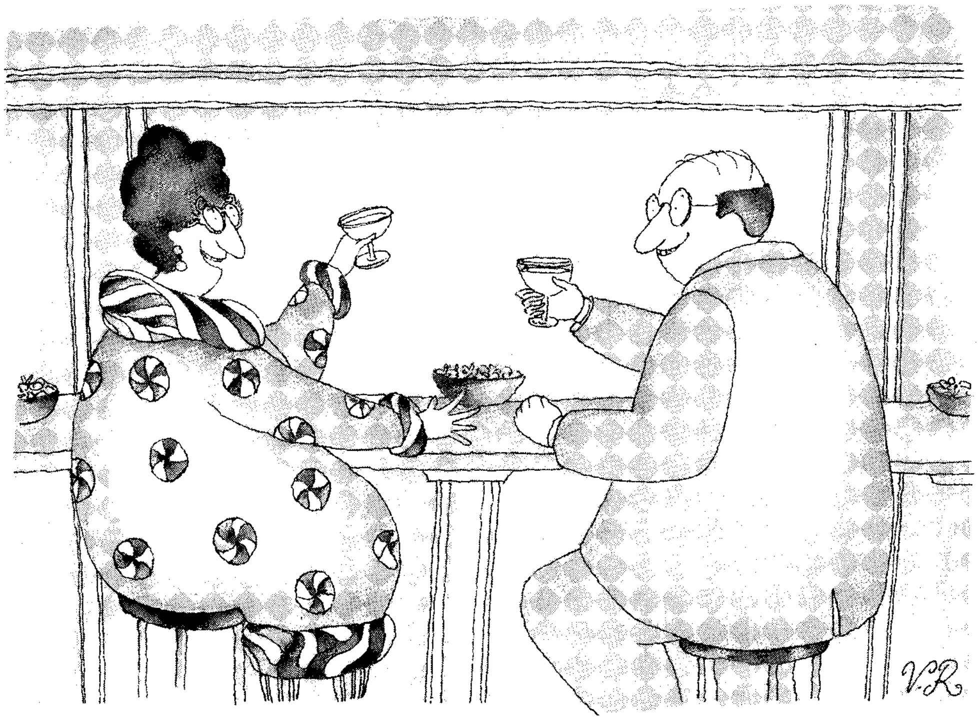
BOOKS

Writer-Consciousness

HAROLD ROSS, the founding editor of this weekly, was wary of, among many other things, "writer-consciousness," and would mark phrases and sentences wherein, to his sensibility, the writer, like some ugly giant squid concealed beneath the glassy impersonality of the prose, was threatening to surface. Writing, that is, like our grosser animal functions, could not be entirely suppressed but shouldn't be performed in the open. Yet fashions in aesthetic decorum change. Modernism, by the spectacular nature of its experiments, invited admiring or irritated awareness of the experimenting author. Intentionally or not, the written works of James Joyce and T. S. Eliot and Virginia Woolf and Gertrude Stein and Ernest Hemingway were exercises in personality, each provoking curiosity about the person behind the so distinctive voice. Postmodernism, if such a thing exists, without embarrassment weaves the writer into the words and the twists of the tale. Italo Calvino's "If on a Winter's Night a Traveler," the mirrors and false bottoms of Vladimir Nabokov's "Pale Fire" and "The Gift," John Barth's self-proposed and exhaustively fulfilled regimens of tale-telling—all place the writer right up front.

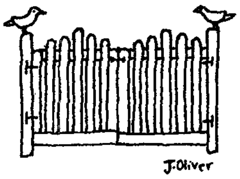
Mario Vargas Llosa, Peru's foremost novelist, as well as the leading candidate for that country's Presidency, has never been averse to writer-consciousness; his early, extensive romp "Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter" (1977, English translation 1982) pursued its action through a series of parodic soap-opera plots somehow sprouting from the head of a character, the indefatigable scriptwriter Pedro Camacho, and the novel is framed by the relaxed voice of a young man whose literary ambitions, excursions to Europe, and pleasant success match with a breezy closeness those of Mario Vargas Llosa. More recently, "The Real Life of Alejandro Mayta" (1984, English translation 1986) showed the first-person narrator piecing together, chapter by chapter, supposition by supposition, the life of a pudgy schoolmate who had turned into a violent leftist revolutionary. Now "The Storyteller" (translated from the Spanish by Helen Lane; Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $17.95) tells the tale of another schoolmate, Saúl Zuratas, who went off to become a storyteller among the Machiguenga Indians, in the jungles of the upper Amazon. As in "Aunt Julia," a tale-teller's voice alternates with the author's voice; as in "Alejandro Mayta," a narrative relativity is invoked, and the imaginative act of speculation takes the place of unquestionable assertion. It *is* asserted that Saúl Zuratas is Jewish and has "a dark birthmark, the color of wine dregs, that covered the entire right side of his face." He is nicknamed Mascarita—Mask Face. "The birthmark spared neither his ears nor his lips nor his nose, also puffy and misshapen from swollen veins. He was the ugliest lad in the world; but he was also a likable and exceptionally good person." We see him, through the nameless narrator's eyes, as a university student who becomes increasingly fascinated by the Indian cultures surviving on the Amazonian side of the Andes; later, at a greater distance, we hear of him, through an American missionary couple, the Schneils, as a nearly naked storyteller wandering among the small, widely separated units of the Machiguenga tribe.

The narrative's levels are multiple. In the foreground, the narrator, a writer in no way distinguished from the author, relates how he was diverted into his subject matter from an intended period of study and repose in Florence: "I came to Firenze to forget Peru and the Peruvians for a while, and suddenly my unfortunate country forced itself upon me this morning in the most unexpected way." An exhibit of photographs of the Peruvian jungle, taken by an Italian photographer, has been mounted near "Dante's restored house . . . and the lane, where, so legend has it, he first saw Beatrice"; these photographs of "the wide rivers, the enormous trees, the fragile canoes, the frail huts raised up on pilings, and the knots of men and women, naked to the waist and daubed with paint" distract the writer from his plan "to read Dante and Machiavelli and look at Renaissance paintings for a couple of months in absolute solitude." The writer has frequently before, we are told, attempted to imagine and tell the curious story of Mascarita. So the composition of what we are reading presents itself as a feat, the fruit of a struggle. Two large literary ghosts are conjured up to aid the telling: Dante, the singer of an otherworldly geography even more ex-



"Put another minnow on my line!"

otic than that of trans-Andean Peru, and Kafka, whose tale “The Metamorphosis,” about a man turned into a giant insect, is the one classic cherished by Saúl Zuratas in his own helpless monstrosity. Saúl's first name holds another literary reference: to the exemplary convert, whose namesake is similarly stricken—“I can say that Saúl experienced a conversion. . . . From his first contact with the Amazon jungle, Mascarita was caught in a spiritual trap that made a different person of him.”



Vargas Llosa is a diligent researcher. Anthropology pervades “The Storyteller,” and, since the Machiguengas are an actual tribe and the acknowledgments credit a number of scholarly and exploratory institutions, we can take the mythology and lore to be authentic. The Machiguengas call themselves “the men who walk”: their survival tactics in the face of competing tribes and the incursions of the white men (called Viracochas) comprise constant migratory motion from one temporary settlement to another, in family groups of as few as ten. Amid a situation of potential total fragmentation, the wandering storyteller serves as a news bearer and oral historian, as “the memory of the community, fulfilling a function similar to that of the jongleurs and troubadours of the Middle Ages.” “Storyteller” isn't quite exact: the Machiguenga word—“a long, loud guttural sound full of *s*'s”—more literally translates as *hablador*, or “speaker.” The narrator of the novel, our modern Peruvian novelist enjoying his Florentine respite, is stirred to think that “storytelling can be something more than mere entertainment.” He is, he confides,

> deeply moved by the thought of that being, those beings, in the unhealthy forests of eastern Cusco and Madre de Dios, making long journeys of days or weeks, bringing stories from one group of Machiguengas to another and taking away others, reminding each member of the tribe that the others were alive, that despite the great distances that separated them, they still formed a community, shared a tradition and beliefs, ancestors, misfortunes and joys.

The *habladores* are “the living sap that circulated and made the Machiguengas into a society.”

The anthropology is more vivacious than the fiction, more plausible than the novel's premise that a white man could insert himself into a central role in a primitive tribe and take on the caretaking of its arcane cultural essence. But it cannot be said that the novelist dodges the difficulties; not only does Vargas Llosa, courtesy of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (real) and the American missionaries the Schneils (fictional), give us a thorough tour of the Machiguenga world as it survives in Peru but he takes upon himself, in the novel's tour de force, the voice of Saúl Zuratas as a Machiguenga storyteller. He mimics the imaginative concision and the hellish slipperiness of American Indian tales, as recorded and compiled by generations of anthropologists. Nothing quite makes sense, or is purely nonsense. The Machiguenga genesis legends have a grandeur and pathos not unfamiliar to those of us raised with the Bible:

> After, the men of earth started walking, straight toward the sun that was falling. . . . There was no evil, there was no wind, there was no rain. The women bore pure children. If Tasurinchi wanted to eat, he dipped his hand into the river and brought out a shad flicking its tail. . . . Those who went came back, and entered the spirit of the best. That way, nobody used to die. . . . After, the earth was filled with Viracochas tracking down men. They carried them off to bleed trees and tote rubber. . . . “It's no use trying to escape from the camps,” said Tasurinchi. “The Viracochas have their magic. Something is happening to us. We must have done something. The spirits protect them, and us they abandon. We are guilty of something.”

As retold by Saúl Zuratas as imagined by Vargas Llosa, the myths are gradually, cleverly infused with novelistic elements. Saúl's pathetic personal history begins to intrude, a process abetted by the pliable way that Tasurinchi, the god of good, takes, Krishna-like, many forms, and bewilderingly becomes the hero of almost any tale that is told:

> Alas, poor Tasurinchi! I'd changed into an insect, that's what. A buzz-buzz bug, perhaps. A Gregor-Tasurinchi. . . . I've asked the seripigari [wise man] many times: “What does it mean, having a face like mine?” . . . Why did Tasurinchi breathe me out this way? Shh, shh, don't get angry. . . . Before, this stain used to matter a lot to me. I didn't say so. Only to myself, to my souls. I kept it to myself, and this secret was eating me alive. . . . We'd best be what we are. The one who gives up fulfilling his own obligation so as to fulfill that of another will lose his soul. And his outer wrapping too, perhaps, lik Gregor-Tasurinchi, who was changed int *a buzz-buzz bug in that bad trance.*

Transformation is the novel's them as metamorphosis is the engine primitive legend. Saúl, born disfigure is born transformed, and his self-conversion into a Machiguenga correc the wrong and completes the cycle. “talking parrot” in the Zuratas household in Lima during Saúl's school da is changed, in the jungle, into Saúl totem—a pet and guardian who trave on his shoulder, who conjures up canopy of friendly parrots, and who Saúl calls Mascarita.

These mock-primitive chapters ar the novel's dark and tangled heart, an they reward a second reading wit greater, though not perfect, intelligibility. Enough, perhaps, has bee quoted to indicate the fervor and vigo of Vargas Llosa's powers of inventio and also the strain he has placed upo them. The smell of ink doesn't quit leave this tale of tale-telling. Littl seems to fall into place lightly. Whe the novelist is being himself and n Saúl being Tasurinchi, he can dro vivid casual details, like the “dar pouches hanging from the palm-le roof” that disappear at daybreak an turn out to be “balls spiders that curled up together,” or lik the interviewed Spanish writer of romances who stores “thousands of novelettes” in her basement and “finishe one every two days, each exactly a hundred pages long.” This novel could d with a little romance. Saúl Zuratas an the narrator, like the heroes of boy adventure books, have no sex live And the notion, insistently repeate that Saúl's being Jewish makes it easie for him to identify and merge with th persecuted Machiguengas comes t seem too simple. Vargas Llosa, if h has a fault, tends to be programmatic; his prose presents a blunt, masculine texture rarely varied by a touch the spontaneously sensual, the offhandedly immediate. “The Storyteller is an animated anthropological, ecological, psychological meditation, admirably intelligent and humane, bu not much, strange to say, of a story.

PETER HANDKE, in “The Afternoo of a Writer” (translated from th German by Ralph Manheim; Farra Straus & Giroux; $14.95), presents texture that is almost alarmingly immediate. Handke can be hysterical—

indeed, hysteria is his métier—but this brief tale of the after-work hours of one of those nameless writers (he walks into town, out of town, has a drink or two, walks home and goes to bed, alone) applies such an intense sensibility to his paragraphs that we seem to enter a supernatural dimension:

> It was early December and the edges of various objects glowed as they do at the onset of twilight. At the same time, the airy space outside and the interior of the curtainless house seemed joined in an undivided brightness. No snow had yet fallen that year. But that morning the birds had cheeped in a certain way—in a monotone suggestive of speech—that heralded snow.
>
> In a bramblebush, single crystals [of snow] would balance on thorns and then encircle them like ruffs. Though there was no one to be seen, the writer had the impression at every step that he was walking in the traces of someone who had been there before.

And when the hero comes in his walk to a convex traffic mirror, and gazes into its bent reflections, we labor along with the translator to realize the precise evanescent shades of reported sensation: "The rounding of the image gave emptiness a radiance, and gave the objects in this emptiness—the glass-recycling center, the garbage cans, the bicycle stands—a holiday feel, as though in looking at them one emerged into a clearing."

Handke's hero is all eyes, all nerves. Being a writer gives his hypersensitivity a use, and also a professional alternation with insensibility. While he writes, he is all but oblivious of the outer world: "In his mind, it was only a moment ago that the midday bells of the chapel of the old people's home at the foot of the little hill had suddenly started tinkling as though someone had died, yet hours must have passed since then, for the light in the room was now an afternoon light. . . . At first he was unable to focus on anything in the distance and saw even the pattern of the carpet as a blur; in his ears he heard a buzzing as though his typewriter were an electric one—which was not the case." Preparing to leave the house, he returns to his study to make one last revision: "It was only then that he smelled the sweat in the room and saw the mist on the windowpanes."

In his few human contacts, too, he is able to turn off. In the bar, a drunk addresses the writer at futile length:

> As he spoke, his face came so close as to lose its contours; only his violently twitching eyelids, the dotted bow tie under his chin, and a cut on his forehead that must have bled recently remained distinct. . . . Not a single word of what he was saying came through to the writer, not even when he held his ear close to the speaker's mouth. Yet, to judge by the movements of his lips and tongue, he was not speaking a foreign language.

The writer inwardly bemoans his deafness, his isolation, his "defeat as a social being." He asks himself, "Why was it only when alone that he was able to participate fully? Why was it only after people had gone that he was able to take them into himself, the more deeply the farther away they went?" Handke's writer suffers a Promethean, a Luciferian, isolation—that of the too greatly daring, the damned. "To write was criminal; to produce a work of art, a book, was presumption, more damnable than any other sin. Now, in the midst of the 'gin-mill people,' he had the same feeling of unpardonable guilt, the feeling that he had been banished from the world for all time." A translator of his (apparently an American), whom he meets in his day's one scheduled encounter, once wanted to be a writer but couldn't bear the onus: "My attempt to decipher a supposed Ur-text inside me and force it into a coherent whole struck me as original sin. That was the beginning of fear." Translation, while being sufficiently engaging, avoids the primordial fear: "By displaying your wound as attractively as possible, I conceal my own."

At his brief excursion's end, our wounded but resolute hero climbs into bed. Trying to recall the hours so vividly just passed, he can visualize only two small details, both of them distorted. Already, he is writing. He is an inscrutable stewing, a transmuter of world into word. "To himself he was a puzzle, a long-forgotten wonderment." To a cold-eyed reader, however, he is in danger of seeming a self-dramatizing solipsist. With a phenomenal intensity and delicacy of register, the little book captures the chemistry of perception and of perception's transformation into memory and language. We are *there* with the writer, behind his eyes and under his skin. But the cultural presumptions that make it worth our while to be there are perhaps more European than universal. These winter walks with reflective, misanthropic bachelors occur also in the brief, elegant contemporary novels of the Swede Lars Gustafsson and Handke's fellow-Austrian the late

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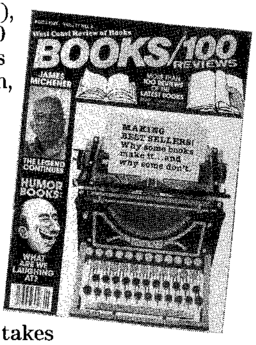
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Thomas Bernhard, and go back to Olympian strolls with Kant and Goethe and Nietzsche. To an American reader, so reverent an examination, by a writer, of a writer's psyche verges on the pompous and, worse, on the claustrophobic.

“The Afternoon of a Writer” is dedicated to F. Scott Fitzgerald, who in 1936 published a short story called “Afternoon of an Author.” Freshly available in Scribners' edition of “The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald” ($29.95), the story offers a sombre contrast with Handke's small, rapt novel. It has none of the Austrian's triumphant undercurrent; Fitzgerald's American scribe is in poor health and down on his luck. He wakes up after nine o'clock, gratefully observes that he does not feel distinctly ill, shuffles through “an annoying mail with nothing cheerful in it,” chats desultorily with his maid, has to lie down for fifteen minutes, and then unsuccessfully tries to write: “The problem was a magazine story that had become so thin in the middle that it was about to blow away. The plot was like climbing endless stairs, he had no element of surprise in reserve, and the characters who started so bravely day-before-yesterday couldn't have qualified for a newspaper serial.” He ends by going through the manuscript “underlining good phrases in red crayon,” tucking these into a file, and dropping the rest into the wastebasket. The process, though dismal, seems more concrete than the creative processes in Handke's book, and there are phrases of sad self-illumination, of a flickering romantic light. Looking into a mirror, the writer calls himself “slag of a dream.” Out riding a bus, he comes into a district where “there were suddenly brightly dressed girls, all very beautiful . . . no plans or struggles in their faces, only a state of sweet suspension, provocative and serene.” He observes within himself a sudden spark of life force: “He loved life terribly for a minute, not wanting to give it up at all.” A deflationary sentence immediately follows: “He thought perhaps he had made a mistake in coming out so soon.”

After getting a shampoo at a barbershop, he rides the bus back to his apartment, reflecting on reviews he received when young, at “the beginning fifteen years ago when they said he had ‘fatal facility’ and he labored like a slave over every sentence so as not to be like that.” He feels fatigue and the “growing seclusion” of his life; he thinks of himself as needing “reforestation” and hopes “the soil would stand one more growth.” But, he further reflects, “it had never been the very best soil for he had had an early weakness for showing off instead of listening and observing.” He makes it back home, chaffers bleakly with the maid, asks for a glass of milk, and lies down again: “He was quite tired—he would lie down for ten minutes and then see if he could get started on an idea in the two hours before dinner.” The reader doubts whether he will get started; the sketch of creative exhaustion is delicate but devastating. Death is not far off. Writer-consciousness, in Handke somehow exhilarating and enviable, in Fitzgerald weighs like a disease, a gathering burden of guilt. We pity the fellow, while perhaps admiring the subtle slight strokes by which his plight is sketched. As so often in Fitzgerald, we have only the afterglow of a dream to see by. There is a strong sense of professional predicament and none of cultural mission; a weary clarity but no wonderment.

A Democracy of honest workmen, it may be, resists the idea that doing one kind of labor deserves more exaltation and excuses more self-indulgence than doing another kind. The shoemaker, for example, doesn't get moony and mock-heroic about pounding out his shapely, intricate product, and doesn't ask to be especially praised for sticking to his last. Yet shoes are more plainly useful than books. We all have chosen, in submission to the passions of childhood and accidents of adulthood, lasts to stick to; and the trade of writer is, with its unstructured hours, opportunities for self-expression, and possible rich rewards, sufficiently attractive so that there are far more applicants than positions available. The lucky few able to see their product into published, distributed, profitable form should be quiet about it, and exaggerate neither the hardships nor the glory of their achievement. Annie Dillard, the inimitable essayist and metaphysician, whose newest flirtation with the absolute is called “The Writing Life” (Harper & Row; $15.95), is able, in the course of her segmented, diverse disquisition

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upon her craft, to come up with an occasional modest shrug: "It should surprise no one that the life of the writer—such as it is—is colorless to the point of sensory deprivation." But more often she presents the writing life as a constant marvel of hazardous adventure and surging metaphor:

> When you write, you lay out a line of words. The line of words is a miner's pick, a woodcarver's gouge, a surgeon's probe. You wield it, and it digs a path you follow. Soon you find yourself deep in new territory. Is it a dead end, or have you located the real subject? You will know tomorrow, or this time next year.
>
> The line of words fingers your own heart. It invades arteries, and enters the heart on a flood of breath; it presses the moving rims of thick valves; it palpates the dark muscle strong as horses, feeling for something, it knows not what.
>
> Every morning you climb several flights of stairs, enter your study, open the French doors, and slide your desk and chair out into the middle of the air. . . . Your work is to keep cranking the flywheel that turns the gears that spin the belt in the engine of belief that keeps you and your desk in midair.
>
> This is your life. You are a Seminole alligator wrestler. Half naked, with your two bare hands, you hold and fight a sentence's head while its tail tries to knock you over.

Some years ago in Florida, she goes on to tell us, an Indian alligator wrestler lost the struggle and his life. And her seventh and last chapter extolls, as an implicit symbol of the writer's feat, the stunt flying of a pilot, Dave Rahm, who eventually crashed and died. Does writing, that most sheltered and stationary of occupations, whose principal hazards are alcoholism and eyestrain, deserve such flights of melodramatic mystique?

Dillard, in her determination to impress her reader—or an imaginary classroom of callow students—with the splendid difficulty of writing, introduces at the outset a couple of dogmas that struck me as not necessarily so. One: "It is the beginning of a work that the writer throws away. . . . The work's beginning greets the reader with the wrong hand." Two: "It takes years to write a book—between two and ten years. Less is so rare as to be statistically insignificant." Well, perhaps Simenon and P. G. Wodehouse and Trollope and Voltaire and Evelyn Waugh (who told the *Paris Review* that his early novels each represented "six weeks' work") and William Dean Howells and Agatha Christie are statistically insignificant, but they did produce books oftener than biennially, without, one suspects, throwing all the first chapters away. If these authors are not the most academically chic, and their books, furthermore, are often laughably slim, consider how Stendhal composed "The Charterhouse of Parma" in seven weeks and Henry James belted out "The Ambassadors," "The Wings of the Dove," and "The Golden Bowl" at the rate of one a year. Not to mention Balzac and Dickens and that obliging hack Shakespeare, who never blotted a line. Styles and methods of writing greatly vary; the kind of writing Dillard does—poetic, inquisitive, philosophically ambitious—no doubt does proceed much as she describes, in the manner of an inchworm attaching its back feet to a grass stem and "in virtual hysteria" throwing its front end about in search of the next footing. As far as I'm concerned, she *could* have thrown her first chapter here away, or at least lowered its pontifical tone.

In her descriptions of herself writing, her dramatic propensities are usefully hitched to a personal narrative. She tells a good story on herself, as, for example, of the way she sometimes lays out her manuscript on a twenty-foot conference table: "You walk along the rows; you weed bits, move bits, and dig out bits, bent over the rows with full hands like a gardener. . . . You go home and soak your feet." Once, she solemnly avers, her typewriter (presumably electric, unlike Handke's writer's) erupted on her like a volcano. The time she spent on lonely insular terrain in Puget Sound working through the writing of her most poetic and religious book, "Holy the Firm," is especially freighted in her memory:

> The writing was simple yet graceless; it surprised me. It was arrhythmical, nonvisual, clunky. It was halting, as if there were no use trying to invoke beauty or power. . . .
>
> Once when I opened my eyes the page seemed bright. The windows were steamed and the sun had gone behind the firs on the bluff. . . . By the time I left, I was scarcely alive. The way home was along the beach. The beach was bright and distinct. The storm still blew. I was light, dizzy, barely there. I remembered some legendary lamas, who wear chains to keep from floating away. . . . My thighs felt as if they had been reamed.

The reader cannot but be excited by her descriptions of nature and her way of examining its details as if they composed a script of the spirit. At her best, she writes like a giantess in love with

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infinity—a sister more of Melville than of Thoreau, an Emersonian without a pinch of Yankee salt. Her writerly remarks are most illuminating when they are most incidental. She reveals in passing that to warm up her writing faculties she reads "pure sound unencumbered by sense"—Conrad Aiken's poetry, or "any poetry anthology's index of first lines." She relates how while writing her first book she let all the houseplants die—they "hung completely black dead in their pots in the bay window." A certain blackness and ruin also attend the finished result of inspiration: "The vision is not so much destroyed, exactly, as it is, by the time you have finished, forgotten. It has been replaced by this changeling, this bastard, this opaque lightless chunky ruinous work." She can be delightfully definite, in a regal manner reminiscent of Rebecca West:

> The novel often aims to fasten down the spirit of its time, to make a heightened simulacrum of our recognizable world in order to present it shaped and analyzed. This has never seemed to me worth doing, but it is certainly one thing literature has always done. (Any writer draws idiosyncratic boundaries in the field.)

Surely we didn't need this anxious, academic parenthesis. A certain split exists in the personality of "The Writing Life." On the one hand, the life, *her* life, is exhilaratingly scrutinized like any other natural phenomenon, as potent and numinous as the tides or insect behavior; on the other, weaker hand, a certain instructive, exhortatory tone seems to want to enlist us in a quixotic but good cause.

Good for what? Both Handke and Dillard present the writer as a hermetic, obsessed creature, whose exquisite creative efforts barely brush the crude question of utility, of audience, of communication. Yet writing is communication, at least with oneself, in the faith that others are like-minded enough to get interested. Dillard says, rightly, "In my view, the more literary the book—the more purely verbal, crafted sentence by sentence, the more imaginative, reasoned, and deep—the more likely people are to read it. The people who read are the people who like literature, after all, whatever that might be. They like, or require, what books alone have." But this class, never a majority, dwindles of late, and both these youngish writers describe encounters with readers or potential readers as comedies of incomprehension. Dillard suspects there is something wrong: "I was too far removed from the world. My work was too obscure, too symbolic, too intellectual. It was not available to the people. Recently I had published a complex narrative essay about a moth's flying into a candle, which no one had understood but a Yale critic." Handke's hero, in the course of his stroll, cringes from the passersby who recognize him as a literary celebrity, and reflects that whenever an interview was published he "would be seized with terror or shame—he would even feel guilty, as if he had broken a taboo." The mysteries the writer nurtures in his or her study are beyond explaining. Readership, a public, and public attention seem violations, embarrassments, beside the point. The writer's artifacts are like shoes that disdain actual feet.

Even Vargas Llosa's *hablador*, though he has a keen audience and an explicable social function, has obscurity problems, outside the small initiated circle. The anthropologist Edwin Schneil, privileged to audit two performances by a Machiguenga storyteller, has to fight against falling asleep in his boredom and bewilderment: "What a hodgepodge! A bit of everything, anything that came into his head. . . . His travels, magic herbs, people he'd known; the gods, the little gods, and fabulous creatures of the tribe's pantheon. Animals he'd seen and celestial geography, a maze of rivers with names nobody could possibly remember." The rapture with which the Machiguengas hear the *hablador* and the interest with which we follow the sensitive revelations of our living authors require a cultural conditioning more extensive than we would like to think. The modern writer, perceiving that his reach is not wide, hopes that it is high. Priestly longings cling to writer-consciousness—pre-Vatican II priests, who kept their backs to the congregation while chanting in Latin. Perhaps what Harold Ross resisted was the imputation among writers that their shoptalk is holy. —JOHN UPDIKE

●

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[*From the London Daily Telegraph*]

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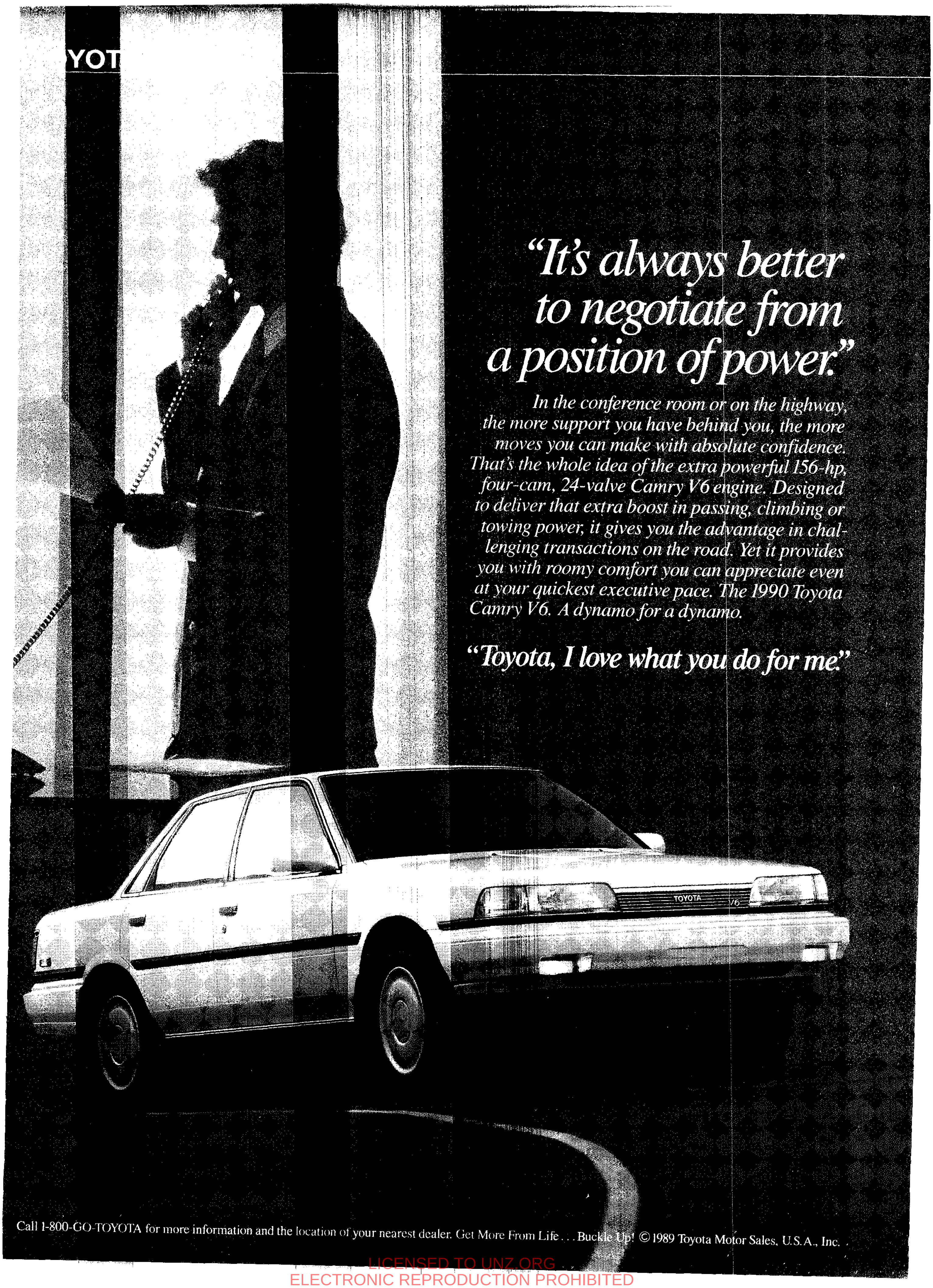

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